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THE MESSAGE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

BY

LEWIS A. MUIRHEAD, D.D.

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"THE TIMES OF CHRIST," "THE ESCHATOLOGY OF JESUS," ETC.

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TO THE AUTHOR'S FORMER SCOTTISH
CONGREGATIONS AT EAST WEMYSS
AND BROUGHTY FERRY, AND TO ALL
WHO SHARE WITH HIM IN THE
DEAR MEMORY OF

L. J. M.

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FOREWORD

THOUGH this book touches necessarily on matters that are controversial, its leading motive is the desire, in God, for peace—and peace with light.

It is written for the unlearned, who while deeply aware of the unique worth of the Gospel of John are yet conscious of mental unrest. They are conscious that the views of modern scholars do not square with those which they have been taught and which have seemed natural, and they feel that they have not leisure or capacity to undertake critical investigation for themselves. Such persons are, the writer believes, a large and growing class, and he desires to help them with as little mental travail to themselves as may be possible. He has aimed at conducting the reader through a comprehensive course of edifying exposition of the teaching of the Gospel, taken, in the main, chapter by chapter. The exposition is pervaded with the assumption that the views of modern scholars regarding the Gospel are in the main correct, and may be held not only without loss but with increase of the reader's sense of its unique spiritual value. The writer put his method

of treatment to a practical test. All the chapters of this book were once sermons. The writer can testify that the preacher had never more deeply interested hearers. The element of discussion has been as far as possible avoided in the chapters and assigned to the *Notes* at their ends. Many matters of detail both in exposition and criticism have been passed by from lack of space. Yet probably most points of real importance in the Johannine problem have been at least mentioned, and many of them have been discussed in a way which it is hoped may be found sufficient by those for whom the book has been written, or, better still, may lead them to further inquiry for themselves.

This Foreword is perhaps the best place to initiate the reader into one or two of the main matters of difficulty and controversy in connection with the Fourth Gospel. To begin, there is the alleged apostolic authorship of the Gospel. This matter is, perhaps, not so important as it looks. The Apostle John is, no doubt, a prominent figure in the early record. But he is a silent inactive figure. We know, by reliable hearsay, very little about him. On the other hand, we know in an internal way a great deal about the writer of the Fourth Gospel, though he never names himself, and speaks of himself, if at all, only in the third person. As the early Alexandrian Fathers noted, John—let us also call the Evangelist so—wrote, not of the " bodily " or outward but of

the inward or " spiritual " things of Jesus. It is a remarkable fact that this ancient verdict stands to this day. Consider what is involved in it. Its most important implication for us at present is that we learn the mind of the Evangelist. You cannot reflect the *mind* of another person by merely *reporting* his words and actions. You can do it only through the working of your own mind in inseparable union with his. In this process the important matter is not that all you write should be literally accurate, but that you should convey an adequate impression of the person who for the time being dwells with you and dominates you. If this represents roughly the case as between John, his subject, and his readers, we are in this Gospel in a region of subjectivity which is clearly marked off from the atmosphere of the three earlier Gospels. In the latter we, for the most part, take the words and actions ascribed to Jesus as actually spoken and done by Him, and the personalities of the writers hardly concern us. They stand aside and we see Jesus for ourselves. With John the direct vision is hardly possible. We see Jesus, indeed, but with John's eyes rather than our own. The mediated vision is in many ways rich and satisfying. But if, nevertheless, we should wish to proceed from John's eyes to our own, we must, so it seems to the present writer, do two things. *Firstly*, we must seek for the synoptic equivalents, for the Johannine scenes.

The latter are, in their own way, for the most part, extraordinarily vivid and impressive, yet their atmosphere is mystical to a degree that seems to put them out of touch with historic reality. The contact with history may, however, in most instances be restored, and our guides to the lines of connection are Mark, Matthew, and Luke. *Secondly*, we must try to discover the reasons that may have led John to transform the original facts in the way he has done. These reasons can, we believe, in most cases be traced if we will exercise patience and the historic imagination. Effort of this kind has been peculiarly fruitful in results when it has been applied to the Johannine *discourses* of Jesus. These discourses are largely inconceivable as discourses actually spoken by Jesus to the " Jews " of His own day. But they gain both place and point when we regard them with the retorts of the " Jews " as reflecting the kind of controversy waged between the Church and the Synagogue about the end of the first century. When the Evangelist puts these discourses into the mouth of Jesus, he does what no modern historian would feel justified in doing, but also, perhaps, what every ancient historian would have blamed him if he had not done. He puts into the mouth of the chief Personage an apt expression of the principles he hears the followers of that Personage advocating in his own day. There would thus be a certain literary analogy between the

speeches of our Lord in the Johannine Gospel and those, say, of Pericles in the pages of Thucydides. At the same time it has to be remembered that the Johannine discourses, while chronologically inaccurate, are not in any serious sense misleading. They are, in general, true to the antagonism which, as we know from the earlier Gospels, existed between the Jewish authorities and our Lord and, when we come to particular cases, we find ourselves constrained to admit that, given such a situation as John has conceived, the particular discourse represents with singular aptness just what the Master might have said.

It is very generally, and we believe rightly, held even by "advanced" modern interpreters, that the Fourth Gospel is itself the best instance and justification of the doctrine it contains regarding the function of the Spirit of Truth ($14^{25\,f.}$, 15^{26}, $16^{7\,f.}$). It gives us some, at least, of the many things Jesus had in mind to say but which His disciples could not bear to hear while He was yet with them. And, looking to the part which the voice given in this Gospel to these sayings of the mind has played in the expression of experimental Christianity, one may surely say that without them the capacity of Christian faith and hope to draw from the deep wells of God and of the spirit of man would have been incalculably poorer than it is. The scriptural doctrine of the power of the word of God (Isa. $55^{10\,f.}$,

Heb. $4^{12\,f.}$) receives a peculiar emphasis in the Gospel of John. Ordinarily, deeds are spoken of as substantiating words. In the Johannine Gospel one might almost say paradoxically that words have the power of substantiating deeds. Thus, it may or may not be strictly true that our Lord healed by a word a paralytic of thirty-eight years' standing beside a pool near Jerusalem. To a modern student the narrative in $5^{1\,ff.}$ looks like a Johannine adaptation of the synoptic story of the healing of a paralytic at Capernaum (Mark $2^{1\,ff.}$, Matt. $9^{1\,ff.}$), but in the Evangelist's mind the warrant for the story, as he gives it, is its power to illustrate the word or truth that the Son of God has life in Himself even as the Father, and that even in His mission in this world He did nothing but what He saw the Father doing (5^{26}, *ibid.* verse 19).

Such a statement of the case may strike us as paradoxical almost to the point of offensiveness. Yet if the importance of the sayings and doings of Jesus does not lie merely in some quality that served the occasion of their origin, but also and rather in their power to interpret the Person and make operative the Presence of the Speaker and Doer as of One who alone reveals the Father, it is surely well to have a version of the sayings and doings which, through its very carelessness in regard to details of time and place and incident, lays a peculiar emphasis upon their eternal quality.

John does not write to tell a story, but to convey an impulse. His aim is not accuracy, whether detailed or merely substantial, but irresistibleness of impulse. And he has succeeded. As regards the evaluation of the Fourth Gospel, the unanimous verdict of nearly two thousand years is not likely to be contradicted even in our advanced day. As Simon Peter, under interrogation regarding fidelity, turned in the name of the disciples to Jesus, so still learned and simple alike turn to this Gospel for the words of eternal life (6^{66-68}).

For all that, there is something to be said on the other side. If we were dependent on John's Gospel alone for our knowledge of Jesus, the indifference of our authority to historical accuracy would be a danger. We might well feel that neither our own faith nor our testimony to others could have sure footing in reality.

Now, it can hardly be said that, as compared with earlier Christian ages, our own is remarkable for an absence of reality in its conception of Jesus and in its contact with Him. Rather the contrary is true, and the reason has been—principally or at least very largely—the attention we have paid to the Synoptic Gospels. We have asked for *reminiscence* of Jesus—clear, coherent, and unclouded with theory—and we have found it there. We have asked for *interpretation* of the remembered Figure and facts, and we have found that too, in *part*, there. For the Synoptists

also are in their measure interpreters and not mere chroniclers of the sayings and doings of Jesus. But we have found the element of interpretation *specially* in John. It is so preponderant here that at moments serious students of the Gospel have asked themselves whether the other scale, that, viz., of historical reality, contained anything at all. These moments of acute doubt have passed. Yet there remains, we believe, the impression that the wealth of instruction and suggestion the Church has found in the Johannine portrait of Jesus has been to some extent at the cost of reality. If we assume this impression to be correct, may we not also assume that a writer of the subtle genius of John was conscious of the debt that had been incurred, and that he believed it could be met from the resources of the synoptic testimony ?

There are two other matters to which we wish to refer in this Foreword. Both of them bear pretty distinctly on the question regarding the presence, or the measure, of the historic element in the Gospel. The *one* is that of " the disciple whom Jesus loved." The question, who he was, has in our time lost *complete* identity with the question, who wrote the Fourth Gospel. Abbott, *e.g.* in his *Fourfold Gospel* has given the great authority of his name to the assertion that in the intention of the Evangelist the " disciple " (let us write him usually with a capital initial and without marks of quota-

tion) was undoubtedly the Apostle John. Yet Abbott does not believe that the latter wrote the Gospel, however close the actual writer's connection with the Apostle may have been. Drummond, in his *Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, thinks it on the whole reasonable to believe that the Apostle was both the Disciple and the writer of the Gospel; while Burney, one of the latest writers on the ever-engaging problem, has in his *Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* given a fresh interest to a suggestion (which did not originate with him) to the effect that the Disciple may have been a Jerusalem-intimate of Jesus, peculiarly qualified through his access to rabbinical circles to represent in the form of discussions the antagonism between Jesus and the men of the Synagogue. We need not attempt here to decide between these learned authorities. They are mentioned for the encouragement of the unlearned reader, who cannot part with the idea that in the Gospel of John we are to some extent at least in direct and not simply mediated touch with historic scenes and persons. Why should any of us part with that idea ? John was undoubtedly indebted to the Synoptists for much, but it seems to the present writer highly reasonable, though it may not be imperative, to suppose that in describing some of the scenes of the Passion he was in touch with sources of information to which the Synoptists had no access. It may be

true that nearly every person or event in the Johannine Gospel acquires under the mystic touch of the writer a symbolic significance. But, after all, symbols are *things* (or, as the case may be, *persons*) before they can be symbols. The "disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast" represents, no doubt, a type of soul-intimacy with Jesus, the vision of which is a pervading fragrance of the Johannine Gospel; but fragrance of this kind could hardly have been *diffused* unless it had first been concentrated in a real person. We confess frankly our belief that the Disciple was a definite individual, who testified to material facts as well as spiritual ideals, and who, for aught any of us *knows* to the contrary, *may* have been the Apostle John.

The *other* matter, to which a brief reference seems necessary, is what may be called, not accurately yet with a certain appropriateness, the Philonic influence in the Gospel of John. The present writer would hardly like to tell how much time he has spent over modern authorities upon the Jew Philo—from Gfrörer to Drummond, and from the latter to H. A. A. Kennedy. But as he presumes to speak briefly and dogmatically on this large subject, it is fair to the reader to say that he has gone through the works of these and other authorities (notably Jowett in his essay, "St Paul and Philo") more than once with great care. Such diligence seems praiseworthy, yet the writer has found it on the whole

only slightly helpful in the study of the Johannine Gospel. The student, whose time is limited, would be well advised to confine his attention to Dr Kennedy's priceless little volume on *Philo's Contribution to Religion*. There he will find all the gold of the earlier writers with other gold that is Dr Kennedy's own. We wish in this Philonic reference to touch upon only one point, which so far as we know has hardly been treated, or, in certain aspects, even touched by any of the writers on Philo.

In the chapters that follow we have treated various passages in the Johannine Gospel as allegorical in the intention of the writer, which do not *look* like allegories, and which it is difficult to believe that even the first readers understood as such. The difficulty is a real one, and perhaps for some readers nothing that we can say here will remove it. For example, the narratives of the woman of Samaria, the impotent man at Bethesda, the raising of Lazarus, do not to our modern ears read like allegories. Yet we for our part are persuaded that they, with a good deal else in the Gospel of John, are in the main allegories and are intended as such by the writer, and this persuasion is partly the fruit of our Philonic studies. We do not read far in Philo without coming on allegorical interpretations of Scripture (particularly the Book of Genesis) which are far more remote from the natural sense of the text than any modern allegorical

interpretation of narratives in the Gospel of John could be from the natural sense of the Evangelist's text. These explanations, which seem to us, and are, so extraordinary, are in many cases adduced without comment, as if they were the most natural in the world. And the reason of this is not that Philo was incapable of seeing—if it had been put to him—how far-fetched they really are, but simply that the interpretations do not originate with him, but have a history that goes back to the time, some three centuries before Philo, when Hebrew saints began to be acquainted with Greek philosophers. Let an interpretation pass from mouth to mouth and pen to pen, let it, however remote from the sense of the text, convey a meaning in itself edifying, and in due time, if the method of allegorising be continued (as we know it was continued among Alexandrian Jews and later among Alexandrian Christians), the interpretation becomes so much a matter of course that no other is even thought of. Once and again Philo refers explicitly to "canons" and "laws" of allegory, and as a rule he allows himself discussion as to the meaning of a particular word, phrase, or narrative only when he finds divergent traditional interpretations. Then the reader is asked to choose between two or three divergent interpretations, which in the eyes of a modern man agree perfectly in the one respect of remoteness from the natural meaning of the text.

We must not forget, further, that the practice of allegorising Old Testament narratives passed from Hellenic Judaism into the Christian Church, where it was prized because of its spirituality. We find examples of it in the New Testament (notably Gal. $4^{24\,ff.}$). We find it commended by Clement of Alexandria and his pupil Origen. Origen refers to it not infrequently in connection with his appreciation of the spirituality of the Gospel of John. Nay, we find it—as Jowett in particular has pointed out, and find it in the same mixture of irrationality in exegesis and spirituality in meaning as in ancient times—in modern expositors and preachers.

We cannot hope, in the few sentences for which we have space here, to persuade any reader who doubts that all this has much or anything to do with possible allegorising in John. Philo at his best—and his best is really good—is a prosaic figure beside the author of the Fourth Gospel. We do not mean to suggest that John copied anything from Philo. He was far too unique and original to copy consciously anything from anybody. But we ask whomsoever it may concern to consider whether it is not likely that a unique spiritual genius and literary artist like the author of this Gospel made a unique use of a literary method that was widely prevalent in the ancient world and universal in the world of Jew and Christian, and that even in his own day was a habit of hoar

antiquity. Even the greatest writers do not abruptly discontinue the literary methods that prevail in their own time. But they give them often a new application. When Philo interprets the passage (Gen. 15^{1} ff.) where God brings Abraham forth to look at the stars as meaning that a good man must leave the prison of the senses and inhabit the world of Divine uncreated ideas, he says what is deeply true but what the writer in Genesis did not think of. Suppose our Evangelist to read such a passage, he would certainly be conscious of the deep truth. He *might* also be conscious of the exegetical absurdity. Whether he were so or not, he would not despise the allegorical method of conveying a spiritual truth. But, living since but lately in a new spiritual region, engrossed with a new object, inspired with a vision of unspeakable glory—the Word made flesh—he would assuredly handle the allegoric method in a new way. In allegorists who shared the tradition, of which the writings of the Jew Philo happen to furnish the fullest illustration, we clearly see that the writer of the original text is one person, in the sense of one *mind*, and the interpreter is another. The harmony between them is artificial. With John in the nature of the case it was not so. The writer of the narratives in the Gospel (one or two of which, by the way, have a certain mystical resemblance to narratives in Genesis) is *one* person, and the allegorist, if he *is* an allegorist,

is the same person. The thesis we suggest is that John, writing for readers who were accustomed like himself to allegories which were unexplained and yet could be explained by methods more or less common to the writer and the reader, purposely set down in his Gospel some narratives which might be partly true in a literal sense, and which would not seriously mislead any reader who might take them to be literally true, but which he himself intended and hoped his more spiritual readers might understand as in the main allegories. We do not profess to have *proved* the thesis. Perhaps it cannot be proved in the sense of appearing to be the inevitable conclusion of a reasoning mind. But these pages have been written from the first with what the reader may call, if he chooses, a prejudice in favour of the thesis, and now at the close the writer testifies that the prejudice has grown almost to the stature of a conviction. We put, he thinks, a veil between ourselves and the Disciple if we fail to recognise that he too in his own sovereign way was an allegorist.

A word more, by the reader's indulgence, of a personal kind. Some forty-six years ago, a good while before such views of the Johannine Gospel as are here assumed were held by many even of the advanced in this country, the present writer sat as a theological student under Dr A. B. Bruce in Glasgow. The Professor taught no advanced views on the Gospel of John. Yet he used to advise his students

not to involve themselves at too early a stage in their ministries in systematic courses of lectures or sermons on this Gospel. He seemed to fear that we might be enticed by the author's simple style to venture on waters that were too deep for us and that concealed some perils. It has often seemed to the writer that this sagacious counsel proceeded partly from a certain misgiving, which Bruce was too candid to conceal from himself, in regard to views of the Johannine Gospel which he had been accustomed to maintain in his writings and which, in his time, were held with practical unanimity by Anglo-Saxon scholars. Anyhow, the present writer acted on his old teacher's advice, so far as to refrain from attempting any systematic instruction on the Fourth Gospel, till after the thirty-ninth year of his ministry. He trusts that this long abstinence may have given him some right to tell his old congregations and some others some of the things he has thought and learnt regarding this wonderful book.

THE MESSAGE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

CHAPTER I

"THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED"

JOHN 20[2]

THE Disciple is never named. But the editors who speak in the twenty-first chapter of the Gospel attest him as its author,[1] and 19[35] inevitably suggests the same thing. At a very early date the Church identified him with the Apostle John, and gave him the title *Theologian*. We may admit the appropriateness of the title, and yet be in doubt about the name. It is a matter of opinion, not a matter of creed. Yet an opinion, backed by due attention to evidence, may have a certain value even for faith. The present writer claims to have attended to the evidence, and he is of opinion that it is, to say the least, not unreasonable to suppose that the ultimate human authority behind the Fourth Gospel is that of the Apostle John. There

[1] John 21[24].

is evidence of what have been called " parenthetical additions," or insertions in the Gospel—evidence that points to the existence for a considerable period of what may be called a Johannine *School*. But there is no such thing as a school without a master, and whether or not in this case the master was the Apostle it will be convenient to refer to him under the name John. If he were the fiery[1] but silent figure of that name in the New Testament history, he would not be the only great teacher in the Church whose greatness, or even existence, is only an inference, but a *necessary* inference, from the impress he has left on a small yet ever-expanding circle of intimate disciples. Nothing is more distinct in the New Testament than the Johannine *style*. Let it sink into our minds that a *style* belongs, in the first instance, to one man and not to a school.

Our concern in these addresses (for we would be preachers) is not the man's style, but his message. Yet the style in his case has a closer connection than usual with the message. The Fourth Gospel stands in marked contrast to the other Three. The latter may, for purposes of comparison, be considered one. The Fourth is later than the Three, and seems to a large extent dependent on them for its material. Yet it never leaves what it borrows just as it found it. It omits, alters, adds in a way we should feel to be seriously disturbing were it not for the half-

[1] Mk. 9^{38} *ff.*, Lk. 9^{49-56}.

unconscious counteractive influence of the synoptic picture of Jesus. But what consciously holds and satisfies us is the merit of John's picture on its own account. The artist would have us see Jesus, and we do see Him, but it is rather through the artist's eyes—though we may be unconscious of constraint —than through our own. John's mind is of the order that, without self-assertion, dominates. He may be silent but he prevails. While we go with him we must see with his eyes—or not at all.

We use the word *vision*. It is John's own word.[1] But it is vision of the constructive not of the photographic order. There is memory in it, but the memory is never alone. It is memory set in motion by intense activity of mind and finding rest in adoration. The Object is the Person of Jesus, the Son of God.

John has names for the two parts of the spiritual phenomenon thus described. The intense mental, or, we should perhaps say, *spiritual* activity he denotes by the verb *believe*. He never in the Gospel uses the noun *faith*. And the reason seems to be that he cannot think of faith in Jesus as an experience to be described in the passive voice. Faith is not leisurely assent. It is intense, responsible action of the mind and spirit. John uses the verb *believe* probably as often as it is used in all the other books of the New Testament taken together.

[1] John 1^{14}

Another word, as emphatic if not so frequently used, is the word *life*. In this case he generally uses not the verb but the noun. This circumstance may warrant us in using the term life to denote the *rest*—part of the process above described. Active faith in Jesus issues in a rest in Him, which is *life*. Only, a rest which is life cannot be mere inactivity. It is rather activity with freedom and joy. It is the activity of love.

If we take as guide the closing words of the Gospel ($20^{30\,f.}$) we shall find that the writer followed and sought to unite in fulfilment two aims, which the learned may wish to distinguish by the words *objective* and *subjective*. The *object*—if we use this phraseology—is the manifestation of the glory of the Son of God, and the *subject* is the designed effect of the manifestation upon the reader, viz. active "believing," issuing in the rest or higher activity of "life." Another way of representing this unity in aim of object and subject—a way which may seem daring yet is inevitably suggested by the Gospel itself—might be to say that as the only-begotten Son had set forth the glory of the unseen Father, so the Disciple who leaned on the breast of Jesus ($13^{23,\,25}$) has set forth in his Gospel the treasures of that sacred intimacy. To those who, like ourselves, find it difficult to believe that with all his sublime indifference to receiving glory from men John could have been in the habit of describing

himself as the "disciple whom Jesus loved," it is open to believe (and surely it is credible) that this description comes from the editorial members of the Johannine School, and belongs to the "parenthetical additions" above alluded to. Plato might well be considered the favourite pupil of Socrates; would he not likely enough have been so described had the editing of the *Dialogues* been entrusted to disciples?

For the rest of this chapter, a word or two in more detail regarding object and subject as above defined.

The manifestation of the Son of God was made particularly in the actual words and deeds of Jesus. It would include actually all that He said and did and was in the world as before God and believing men. How could this manifestation be represented in a book? Clearly only by a selection of the words and deeds which the author regarded as specially characteristic and significant.

In its general character the manifestation or revelation is, of course, miraculous. It does not proceed from men or come from their level. But the heavens are opened and the light comes in rays of "grace and truth" from above. Whatever may be fairly objected to a particular miracle-narrative here or there, let it be herewith laid down uncompromisingly that there is no such thing as a non-miraculous Christianity. The Son of God is not a product of nature, or even the flower of the human

race. He descends from above, and no man ascends save through Him. No writing in the world has stated more impressively this absoluteness of the claim of Jesus. We may accept the claim or we may reject it, but the claim itself remains unalterably unique and absolute. There is no argument for Jesus but Jesus Himself. He who believes, John teaches, is not condemned but has passed from death to life, if so be his belief is really the homage of his heart and will. He who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

As John cannot give us in a book all the signs that Jesus made, whether in word or deed, he gives us a selection, and we may note as a sign of his spiritual artistry that the number of the selection is seven. Apart from the introduction and the story of the Passion, the Gospel may be said to consist of seven miracle-narratives, and the comments or conversations to which the miracles give rise. It has been noticed, and is, as may appear later, worth remarking, that the miracles may be characterised according to the persons or groups to whom their testimony is directed. Thus there are two, the turning of water to wine and the walking on water, that are addressed specially to the disciples, who see His glory and believe on Him (2^{11}). Three—the curing of the courtier of Capernaum's son, and the cures wrought on the impotent man at Bethesda, and on

the man born blind—seem to be directed specially to the more cultured portion of the Jewish people, both the minority who come to the light and the majority who shun it. And finally there are two, the feeding of the five thousand and the raising of Lazarus, whose appeal seems to be intended for the multitude.

John hardly seems to connect the miracles, as the earlier Gospels do, with the compassion of Jesus for the human needs they immediately meet. They are rather for him points of attraction, round which Jesus discourses on the truths which set forth the glory of His own Person. Thus, if Jesus opens the eyes of a man born blind, it is because He is the Light of the world. Or if He calls from the grave one who has been dead for four days, it is because He is Himself the Resurrection and the Life. The signs are of worth only as they reveal the permanent reality, the Son of God who became flesh and was manifested in the world.

Yet, human nature being what it is, the "signs" or "works" may be considered indispensable. On the one hand, they are fitted to initiate faith or to let it come to its rights; on the other, they serve the stern but necessary purpose of convicting unbelief. "Believe Me for the very works' sake." "If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin. But now they have no cloke for their sin."

Let us close by trying to gather up the practical

implications of describing the result of believing on the Son of God as *life*.

Firstly, the description is apt, because it links the gift of God in His Son with that which we all prize above everything. If any word can describe what God gives in His Son to those who believe, it cannot be of less potency than what may stand for life as it is in the man or woman who is in all conceivable senses most alive. Life will have nothing outside itself. Shall it take all and leave out God? He would not have it so. He gives the life that is in His Son.

Secondly, this Gospel marks with special distinctness three characteristics of this life that is in the Son of God: (1) It is life "from above" (3^3, R.V., marg.), and is therefore "above all" (3^{31}). It is not only above merely animal life, it is also above every kind of human life that is without the acknowledgment of the supremacy of Jesus. Those who have life in the Son are "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1^{13}).[1] That is why faith is necessary. For faith is the co-operation of our will with God's in this life that is from above. It is the active acknowledgment of the indispensableness of Jesus to life in man, and of His supremacy in that life.

[1] See on this passage an instructive article on "The Ancient Physiological Notions underlying John 1^{13} and Hebrews 11^{11}" by Prof. H. J. Cadbury in the *Expositor*, December 1924.

Silently but impressively, through his use of the verb and not the noun, John lays stress in the activity of faith. There can be no activity of man comparable in importance and result to the act in which we *believe* that Jesus is the Son of God and find life in His name.

Yet (2), life in the Son of God is God's "gift." The gift must be sought. It must be accepted when offered. Believing includes both the seeking and the accepting. Yet the life cannot be earned. We find Jesus in this Gospel offering Himself to people who are ignorant, or prejudiced, or hostile. Though the darkness did not *lay hold*[1] of it, the light that shone in that darkness shines still. We have to *come* to this light (3^{20} f.), that we may receive the life that is the light of men and may know ourselves the offspring of God.

Finally (3), this life that is in the Son of God and is God's gift is life that lasts. Other meat perishes, but the meat of the Life that came from above and was sacrificed in the flesh for us endures for ever. This Gospel lays a unique emphasis on *eternal life*. In a manner hardly represented in the Three, it puts the testimony to it and to its identity with Himself into the mouth of Jesus. The Three give us more

[1] The word rendered in the A.V. by *comprehend* at John 1^{5} and by *apprehend* at Phil. 3^{5}. It is disputed whether in the former passage it ought not to be rendered by *overcome* (R.V., marg.). The fundamental meaning of the word is *to lay effective hold upon*.

accurately what Jesus spoke in the hearing of the ear. But the Disciple whom Jesus loved, and who reclined on His breast, can give us the unspoken language of His mind and heart. He would have us hear the Son of God saying, "I am the Bread of Life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger"; and again, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die" ($6^{48\,ff.}$, 11^{25}). The teacher, in whose mind the scheme and style of this Gospel originated, set himself the task of helping believers in all time to come to hear this language of the heart of Jesus. In the unique place which throughout the Christian centuries and to this day the Fourth Gospel has occupied in the affections of spiritually-minded men and women, we have some measure of the success that has crowned his labour and of the approval with which it has been stamped by the Master Himself. Who shall say how much poorer we should have been if the Disciple whom Jesus loved had been as silent with his pen as he was with his lips?

CHAPTER II

WAS THE "THEOLOGIAN" PHILOSOPHER ALSO? JOHN 1[1, 3, 4]

"IN the beginning was the Logos (=*word* or *reason*, Greek), and the Logos was with (Greek, *towards*) God, and the Logos was Divine. All things were made by Him." "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." We read these words, and the question which makes a title for this chapter seems superfluous. If anyone can understand these short but pregnant sentences, it will be, we justly say, a philosopher.

Yet, when we notice that after 1[14] the word *Logos*, in the sense in which it occurs in these opening verses, disappears altogether, we may feel that there is some reason for the interrogative mood. For the disappearance suggests that while the Evangelist would make recognition of a certain current philosophy, he would not involve either himself or his readers in any responsibility for its details. We shall try in this chapter to indicate briefly how far this recognition went, or what it implied.

The writers of the Bible, Old Testament and New,

were not abstract thinkers. Truth came to them not by what is technically called *dialectic* but by what has been called *intuition* or *inspiration*. God *revealed* Himself to His chosen people the Jews, and *inspired* men or prophets reported the revelation. But there were Greeks in the world as well as Jews. And with Alexander the Great the time came when the Jew and the Greek, the prophet and the philosopher, met. The meeting had taken place about three centuries before John wrote. The chief place of it was Alexandria, and the chief exponent of the intellectual and spiritual blend which resulted from it was, as it happens, an elder contemporary of our Evangelist, Philo, the Jew of Alexandria, born about 15 B.C. It is unlikely, or at least uncertain, that John had any direct acquaintance with the writings of Philo. But it is likely that he shared with Philo the peculiarity of Jewish birth, and more than likely that he breathed freely in that Græco-Jewish atmosphere of which, though it is much older than he, Philo is, for the student of the Bible, by far the most striking representative.

There are two senses (which it concerns us particularly to notice) in which it may be said that John has part with Philo. The *one* bears on the term *Logos*. Like Philo, John was not only willing but constrained to conceive an Intermediate Being —a *Word* or *Reason*, for *logos*, in Greek, means both —which unites all parts of the created universe and

at the same time (because it is Divine) is able to connect this finite whole with the infinite and absolute God. The *other*, less metaphysical perhaps but for students of the Fourth Gospel not less important, bears on what is known as the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture. That method, though known to *us* primarily through Philo, is as Philo himself frequently insists much older than he. The present writer believes that in a way peculiar to himself, that owes nothing to Philo or, perhaps, anyone else, John used the allegoric method in setting forth his testimony to Jesus, the Son of God. The importance of this matter will appear as we proceed. Meanwhile we may connect it in our minds with the title "theologian."[1] John was not a theologian in the sense of setting forth the truths of the faith in a reasoned system. Yet the name expresses with some fitness the fact that John was not an Evangelist in the sense of simply recounting the facts of the life of Jesus. The great Christian Alexandrians, Clement and Origen, who wrote in the third century, express what had been for long even in their day the settled judgment of the Church, when they say that, while the other Evangelists wrote of the "bodily"[2] facts of the life of our Lord,

[1] The word appears in the title of the N.T. Apocalypse, the author of which was believed to be the Apostle John, the writer, also, of the Fourth Gospel.

[2] Greek, *ta somatica*, in contrast to the *ta pneumatika* or "spiritual" facts.

John concerned himself specially with the "spiritual."[1] And Origen (*circa* 185–254), finding himself in his commentary on John in difficulties over the reconciliation of John's statements with those of the other Evangelists, makes a striking remark to the effect that where reconciliation is impossible, the spiritual facts as the real bearers of the truth are to be preferred, "the truth being," he says, "in this case preserved, as one might say, by the bodily lie." There is then, in the judgment of this third-century theologian, the greatest Christian teacher of his day, much that is inaccurate in point of material fact in this Gospel, and a good deal that is rather allegorically than literally true. Yet Origen deliberately judges that this inaccurate chronicler of facts in space and time penetrated in a rare degree into the mind and spirit of the Master, and that it is in the realm of ideas rather than in that of "bodily" facts that the truth of the eternal *Word*, which is first of all spiritual, can be disclosed to the eye of faith.

We express the same thing when we say that of all Evangelists John is the thinker.

His Gospel lacks the charm of a series of episodes that engage the imagination. We cannot simply read and *look*, we must read and *think* all the time.

[1] An instructive notice of Origen in this connection will be found in Drummond's *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* p. 32 ff.

We must think with the author, until, if it be possible, we think the very thoughts of the Logos Himself.

But we must bring our minds back to the question of this chapter: was the theologian also a philosopher? Harnack says cleverly that the Prologue of John's Gospel is a problem and not the solution of one. Like too many clever sayings, this one is only very partially true. It is true that, after 1^{14}, John does not again use the expression *Logos* in the technical sense of the Alexandrian philosophy. But it is also true that he could not reasonably expect to get his message home in the Jewish-Gentile world, for which he wrote, without a certain participation in thoughts that were current and even dominant in that world. It may have been the easier for him to show this participation, that he was probably what Philo was certainly—a Jew. We must remember, moreover, that Philo was not merely or even mainly a speculative thinker. He was rather in a perfectly definable sense a missionary. The principal fact about him is not the rather confused and eclectic system which might be called his philosophy, but rather his tireless, and, we think, deeply religious zeal for the Jewish faith. He was a voluminous commentator on the Old Testament—in particular the Pentateuch. He was the chief illustrator, though not the originator, of that allegoric mode of interpretation of which we have

several distinct examples in the New Testament.[1] Judged by modern standards, no method of interpretation could be more arbitrary or more certain to mislead. Yet in Philo's case the method was inspired by a missionary impulse. He sought to show that there is nothing in all the wisdom of the Greeks that has not been anticipated by the Jewish prophets, particularly Moses. But, to come back yet again to the special matter of this chapter, how far did John go with Philo in philosophy? At least so far as to believe in a Being intermediate somehow between God and the world and man. He believed that this Being was Divine. He was the Agent in creation and the enlightener of men from the substance of His own eternal life which was love to God and love to man. He was willing to call this Being, with a capital initial, *Logos*, *Word* or *Reason*. Why should not Philo and he, why should not the Jewish and Gentile world, come mutually as near as possible over what they understood, severally or in common, by this accepted term *Logos*? John, the theologian, the thinker, was ready for his part.

Thus far John could go with Philo. But at this point he took a road which Philo never trod, but which, in John's view, Philo's successors must tread if they were to be gathered into one[2] with the children of God. He shows us this road, when using

[1] For example, 1 Cor. 9^{9} ff., 10^{1} ff., Gal. 4^{24} ff.

[2] John 11^{52}.

for the last time the term common to the non-Christian Jews, the Gentiles and himself, he writes: "And the Logos became flesh, and tarried among us, and we beheld His glory."

John drops the term *Logos*, but the Being who had been so named goes with us into the pages of this Gospel. He goes with us as a Master, who would have us see where He dwells that we also may dwell with Him. No man has seen God at any time; but the Only-Begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father and who became flesh, has declared Him. And we are to study the manifestation by the aid of one who, in the days of His flesh, was His dearest comrade and knew, as none other, the secrets of His heart.

It is not to be supposed that there is nothing in Jesus but what John has seen and heard. This Gospel speaks of a truth in Jesus that makes men free,[1] and this freedom means, whatever else, freedom to see with our own eyes and to hear with our own ears. Yet we shall do well for our own freedom if we will stand by the side of this master seer that we may share his vision.[2] This is all he asks for: "What we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; for truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with Jesus Christ His Son."

We do this not the less but the more reverently

[1] John 8^{32}. [2] 1 John 1^{3}.

if we do it with freedom reserved in every case to judge for ourselves. We shall say to our guide what the Samaritans said to the woman: "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." [1]

Note on Philo and his Method

This note may help some readers. In at least three of his writings (*Dreams*, *Sacrifices*, *Abraham*) Philo uses such expressions as the "laws" or "canons" of allegory, and speaks of it as an "old fashion" (*archaiotropos*). It is not too much to say that in some of its manifestations the mode was old-fashioned even in the time of the Greek translators of the Old Testament (*i.e.* the third century B.C.). Thus, *e.g.*, a characteristic of the translators is an aversion to all modes of expression which seem to imply the visibility of God. In Exod. $24^{9\,f.}$ we read in the Hebrew Bible that Moses and Aaron and the seventy elders of Israel "*saw* the God of Israel." For these last words the Greek translators substitute: "They saw the place where God had stood," and for the words, "They beheld God and did eat and drink," the Greek version gives, "They were seen in the place of God." Even more remarkable than those alterations of the Hebrew text is the *addition* to it in the same passage of the words: "And not even one of the chosen of Israel died." Such alterations and additions are made without explanation —a circumstance which of itself seems to prove that the mode which they represent is of old standing.

[1] John 4^{42}.

The allegoric method of interpretation practised by the Alexandrians is easier to exemplify than to describe. It will be helpful to give an example of it that has a certain suggestiveness in relation to the Fourth Gospel. In the *Third Book of the Allegories* Philo has a long note on Exod. $16^{9\,f.}$ where, at verse 14, the Greek version (which Philo seems to have used exclusively) reads : " And, behold, upon the face of the desert a *small round thing* (*lepton*) like a white coriander, like *ice* (*pagos*) on the earth." Philo plays upon the resemblance between the word *korē*, which means the *apple of the eye*, and *korion*, which means *coriander*, and finds the former a much more fruitful source of spiritual interpretation than the latter. " As the little eye can see all zones of the earth, the measureless sea, and the infinite expanse of air, so also the Divine Logos is keen-sighted, and able to view all things. Nay, it is by *Him* alone " [or *It*, for the question of the personality of the Logos does not seem to have come within the orbit of ancient philosophy] " that we are able to see all truth. Something peculiar happens when this Logos calls a soul to Himself. Everything earthly, sensuous, corporeal, freezes together in that soul. Therefore in the text also it runs : *It was like ice on the field.* Souls ask themselves what the Logos may be when they have experienced His effects. So in other matters it is often the case with us. We do not know whence the taste comes that fills our tongue with sweetness. Often we do not know the odour that delights us. The same happens to the soul also. A high joy is imparted to her, but she knows not whence it comes. This is the solution which the holy prophet, Moses, gives her. ' This is the bread,' says he, ' the nourishment which God

has given to the soul, viz. His Word, His Logos.'" Philo then quotes Deut. 8^3 and expands: "He satisfies us with manna, *i.e.* with His word, which includes everything in itself and is pure being, the most *general* (*genikōkaton*) thing in existence. For the Divine Logos is over the whole world, and older and more *general* than all creatures." Commenting on the expression, *every word*, in the Deuteronomy passage, he remarks that man is nourished both "by the whole Logos and by a part of It. For *mouth* is a symbol of speech, and a *word* is part of speech." "The soul of the prophet," he concludes, "is nourished by the whole Logos, but we shall be content if only a part of the Divine Word fall to our lot."

Philo's view of *inspiration* is pretty much what Schwegler in his account of Neoplatonism has described as a "swooning into the Absolute" (*History of Philosophy*, Hutcheson Stirling's translation, p. 140). His view may be seen perhaps most clearly in his treatise on *Special Laws*: "A prophet reveals nothing at all of his own, but is an interpreter, another suggesting all he utters, and he being in ignorance so long as he is in the ecstatic state. His reason having removed and withdrawn, the Divine Spirit visits and inhabits the citadel of the soul. The Spirit plays upon the organic structure of the voice, and brings to clear, vocal expression the things of which he prophesies."

Perhaps the most satisfactory philosophic exposition of the view of the relation of the human and Divine factors underlying Philo's conception of the ecstatic condition is to be found in the writings of Plotinus of Lycopolis in Egypt, who taught in Alexandria about two centuries after Philo, A.D. 200–270. See Inge's

Philosophy of Plotinus, Hibbert Lectures, St Andrews. On what may be called the *modern* interest of the practice of allegorical interpretation, we commend very specially Jowett's Essay, "St Paul and Philo," in his *Commentary on the Epp. to the Thess., Gal., and Rom.*, vol. ii., p. 392, Lewis Campbell's edition. The passage is a powerful *Tu quoque* argument directed against too confident critics of the ancient allegorisers. "The method which they employ has not ceased to be practised by ourselves. It cannot be said that we have left off interpreting Scripture by what we have brought to the text, not by what we have found there, or that we have not assumed double senses, types, allegories, either to avoid difficulties or to adapt the Old Testament to the New, and in general the meaning of Scripture to the opinions of our own time, or that in portions of Scripture such as the Book of Daniel and the Apocalypse we have not run into excesses about numbers, colours, and animals as great as these of Philo in the Book of Genesis . . . lastly, that we have not degraded science or history into mere instruments for eliciting out of Scripture our own belief, when we ought to have recognised their true dignity and independent authority in the sight of God and man." The whole long paragraph is a fine example of the durableness of Jowett's work (too soon abandoned) on the New Testament. Not a syllable of it needs to be altered to suit 1925. In regard to Philo's works it should be noted that they are usually quoted under Latin titles : *De Somniis*, *De Sacrificiis*, *De Abrahamo*, *De Legibus Allegoriarum*, etc. For a complete list of them and of modern editions of Philo, see H. A. A. Kennedy's *Philo's Contribution to Religion*, p. 242 ff., and 1 ff.

CHAPTER III

THE VISION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

JOHN 1^{34}, 3^{30}

OUR Evangelist's account of John the Baptist is, by comparison with the synoptic record, short and even misleading. It tells us little of his personal history and does not mention the word *repentance*. It mentions [1] but does not narrate his imprisonment. It gives us one or two geographical notes [2] regarding the baptizing with water. More serious than such omissions is the implication of the narrative that, from the beginning of his ministry and unwaveringly, the Baptist recognised Jesus as the Messiah, and introduced Him as such to His first disciples who openly and from the first greeted Him as the "Son of God" and the "King of Israel."

Well, we have the Synoptic Gospels. Let us be thankful that we have them, and let us remember that, in reference to such "bodily" matters as those just touched on, the "spiritual" Gospel was neither

[1] 3^{24}. The passage is very likely a "parenthetic addition."
[2] 1^{28}, 3^{23}.

fitted nor intended to be an amender or a rival of the earlier accounts of Jesus. The function of the spiritual Gospel would be neither to add nor subtract (though it might do either or both *incidentally*), but simply to look at the facts as a whole and to say in the light of reflection and the unfolding of history on what points in that total the emphasis should fall. Our Evangelist was not concerned with the doubts either of John the Baptist or of the first disciples of Jesus, however much he may or must have known about them. He was concerned, in the main, only with the issue of these doubts at that glorious moment when, however and on what differing occasions it may have come, the heavens were opened for the disciples of Jesus and their first master the Baptist, and they saw, in a manner recalling the vision once granted to father Jacob, the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Let us, then, allow that our Evangelist's representation of the ministry of the Baptist, however meagre by comparison with the synoptic picture, lays a unique emphasis on two matters that are of immense importance to the historian and to the Christian believer. The *one* is that the Christian Church, so far as it existed in the period covered by the gospel narratives, sprang directly and visibly from the spiritual movement of which John the Baptist was the inspired leader. The Baptist may have

enjoyed, whether privately or publicly, very little contact with Jesus. According to our Evangelist, he refused to be called Elijah,[1] and therefore, one would think, to be in an orthodox sense the "Preparer of the way." Yet he did prepare the way of the Lord and was called Elijah by Jesus Himself. He may have kept off the track of Jesus and needed to be informed about Him by his own disciples,[2] yet it was Jesus who proclaimed him among the greatest of men born of women, a man, it would seem, of force enough to take heaven itself by storm. If any man, being mortal, could be said to be, historically speaking, indispensable to the beginnings of the movement we call Christianity, that man was John the Baptist.

Now it was important, as we may see immediately, even in a negative sense, to make this state of the case plain. How much more in a positive. Nothing can be truer, or, in the large sense, more historical, or (should it be denied) more necessary to be said than that the force, which somewhere about A.D. 30 stirred the heart of Palestine as it had not been stirred since the days of the prophets, and had issue, perhaps just when it seemed to be spent, in the circle that gathered round Jesus, proceeded under God from one, John, son of Zechariah and Elisabeth, known as the Baptist. In this state of

[1] 1^{21}; *cf.* Mal. $4^{5\,f.}$, Mark 9^{12}, Matt. 11^{7-15}, Luke 7^{24-35}, Matt. 21^{25-32}.
[2] John $3^{25\,ff.}$

the case we ask, might it not be legitimate and more for *our* John, the Evangelist, not being in any formal sense either a chronicler or a historian, but a spiritual artist and teacher of the first rank, to express matters dramatically by conceiving scenes in which the Baptist points his disciples to Jesus as the Saviour of the world, or even speaks of Him explicitly in terms that would be appropriate on the lips of a Christian theologian at the end of the first century, but could hardly have been used even by the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets?[1]

The *other* point at which the value, in respect of emphasis, of our Evangelist's testimony regarding the Baptist appears, is the stress he lays on the Baptist's repudiation both of dignity and personal worth. It is almost as though, in the Evangelist's view, the one fact of capital importance regarding the Baptist was that "he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ" (1^{20}).

Now, while we must remember before we close this chapter that great denials usually imply great *assertions* or *confessions*, we do well to notice that our Evangelist's emphasis upon the Baptist's denial may have had a quite distinct and particular historical motive. For reasons that need not

[1] The remark applies especially to 3^{31-33}, whose true place Dr Moffatt and others consider to be after 3^{21}. Dr Moffatt regards the position of the passage in our text of the Gospel as an instance of "accidental displacement," of which he finds examples elsewhere, particularly in the *Farewell Discourse* (chaps. 14–16).

concern us now, scholars of all schools are agreed that the atmosphere of the Johannine Gospel is Asiatic, and that the predominant influence in it is that of a teacher who in all probability was located at Ephesus. Now we read in Acts $19^{1\,ff.}$ of certain "disciples," found at Ephesus, who were baptized only with the baptism of John. Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost. The passage is puzzling, but it does seem to imply that there were at Ephesus, and there may have lingered there and elsewhere, a body of spiritually minded men, not numerous but also not negligible, who called themselves Christians, yet did not fully associate themselves with the Church, and named the name of John the Baptist. Sects die hard. According to our Evangelist, the public ministries of our Lord and of the Baptist continued for a time side by side (3^{23}–4^{1}) and there was rivalry between the two sets of disciples. It is a likely supposition that the Baptist-sect, if it could be called such, still lingered at Ephesus when our Evangelist wrote. In that case it would be very natural for the Ephesian Evangelist so to frame his account of John the Baptist as to make it appear that the last thing that great prophet could have thought of was to found a sect that should be in any sense a rival to the circle who had found the Messiah. Hence our Evangelist's emphasis upon the denial of the Baptist—a denial, which in the very form in which

it is narrated (repetition of *confessed*) is seen to be a denial that was also a great confession.

It will be noticed that in our Gospel the baptism of Jesus is not directly narrated. But the Baptist himself alludes to it, in order to say that it was at the baptism that he had his vision of the Spirit descending upon Jesus and "saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." A man's "vision" is the secret of his own soul, and is, perhaps, in the last resort a secret (though it may be an open one) even from himself. The heavens were opened to him, God spoke to him. If the man himself is in some way outside his own vision—how much more we! Yet the value of a vision, whether our own or another's, is disclosed in its sequel. For the sequel is the effect upon the seer himself, and the effect is a matter of experience. Looking in this case to the experimental sequel, we are perhaps able in a certain degree to answer the questions: Wherein lay the Baptist's greatness? Wherein lay the secret of his vision? Anyhow, we may try to answer these questions as our Evangelist has answered them.

Wherein lay the greatness of the Baptist? We might think of the unique vocation of the last of the prophets. We might think of his lightning-glance into the heart of the corrupt nation, and of his prevision of its doom. We might think of the voice that could make a nation its audience, and draw to the wilderness "Jerusalem and all Judea and

the region round about Jordan." Yet, according to our Evangelist, the greatness of the Baptist did not lie in these things. It lay rather in this: that having all these gifts, he thought himself scarcely a person, only a voice. Having all these things, he "confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ."

A remarkable, and surely as true as remarkable, mental picture of John the Baptist: A man, we should say, great in himself, a man of practically measureless spiritual endowment, yet never for a moment losing his head about himself, but depressed rather by a sense of his own futility because his mind's eye was fixed on One Greater who could *do* the things of which he only could dream—One who could not only detect a nation's corrupt heart but could change or else destroy the evil.

If we ask, as a question not relating to the physical heavens but to human experience, in what sense may we say that John the Baptist saw the Spirit descending on Jesus, the question may perhaps best be answered by asking another: How have men in all the Christian ages been prepared to believe in Jesus as the unique Son of God? The case of the Baptist supplies the answer. It is by finding in their heart an aim or purpose that has come to them from God only. They would give their life and more to be able to accomplish it. But it is beyond their power, beyond even their peculiar

endowment from above. And they know it. Yet they also know that it is not beyond the power of a Stronger One, who will come after them and yet was before them. John the Baptist took on his spirit—no mortal ever did a greater thing—the aim to make a whole nation repentant in heart. He found and owned that he could not do it. Feeling it to be the work of a Stronger One, he yet continued in it. We may stake the Christian faith upon the certainty that to one in this attitude the Stronger One did come, and John "saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

It is through some imperative enterprise of truth and love impossible to us yet possible to God that we go to Jesus Christ and He comes to us. And when He comes we, too, bear record that He is the Son of God.

So, for all time, the Baptist with his task, at once imperative and impossible, is the preparer of the way.

CHAPTER IV

THE LAMB OF GOD AND THE ISRAELITE INDEED

JOHN 1[35 ff.]

THE Church is built on the rock of the confession that Jesus is the Son of God. In his first chapter John lets us see the beginning of the building. Of the five or six names of disciples mentioned or indicated, one is an enigma. John apparently does not wish us to know, though he may wish us to imagine, who Nathanael[1] was. If we must have a theory, the likeliest, perhaps, still is that Nathanael is the Apostle Paul. With all his "sovereign freedom,"[2] John could not speak of Paul as one of the Twelve. But Paul was the father of the Church in Ephesus as in so many other places, and John may very well have wished—while on the subject of the apostles—to offer in characteristically cryptic fashion a tribute to one who, now in the perspective of some five-and-twenty years, was seen to be the greatest of them all. Be this as it may, in the

[1] The name means "gift of God." The name occurs again only in the Appendix (21[2]), where he is connected with Cana of Galilee.

[2] Harnack.

little drama here devoted to the apostolic band Nathanael is the most interesting figure. On the dark side of things John's Gospel is full of the prejudiced hostility of "the Jews" against Jesus. To them it is enough to discredit Him that He comes from Nazareth and is a Galilean. But here is a man prejudiced from birth with the idea that no good thing can come out of Nazareth, who allows the light on the face and word of Jesus to shine on his prejudice and chase it away. Him Jesus hails as an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile. And to him, being perhaps somewhere near Jabbok, where Jacob wrestled with the angel and was called Israel,[1] Jesus promises visions of angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

In the drama of beginnings which John brings before us there are two main things: *Firstly*, the testimony concerning Jesus which produces the apostolate; and *Secondly*, the growth of the apostolate once the testimony is received. The person who gives the testimony is naturally John the Baptist, and the drama has two *Acts*, in each of which are more than one *Scene*.

Act I, *Scene* 1.—The Baptist gives his testimony in a kind of soliloquy, which yet is uttered in the presence of an audience. The time is three days,[2]

[1] Gen. 32^{24} *ff.*, *cf.* Hos. 12^{3} *ff.*

[2] It may very well be, however, that the scheme of chapters 1 and 2 is one of *six* days, and that 2^{1} indicates the third day from the last of the three mentioned in $1^{29, 35, 43}$. In that case the "third day"

and this Scene is all we have for the first day. Jesus is seen approaching. The testimony is: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The Evangelist tells us in the next chapter that the Jews' Passover is at hand. The atmosphere of the Passover pervades the Gospel. The events or "signs" of the life of Jesus are grouped round three Passovers.[1] Presumably, therefore, we are intended to think of the Passover-lamb. The Jews ate the Passover-lamb and remembered their deliverance from Egypt. That lamb was only a symbol, but Jesus is the real Passover-Lamb, the Lamb *of God*, the true redemption and food of the soul. He "takes away [2] the sin of the world." We can hardly suppose that the Baptist actually put his testimony to the Messiah in just this way. His conception of the One to come was rather that of One who should put away sin by executing judgment upon it, hardly that of

of 2^1 would be really the sixth or even (if we include in the scheme the day of the Baptist's testimony in $1^{19\text{-}28}$) the *seventh* day, and we may be fairly certain that the Evangelist intends to represent a mystical connection between the First Creation, which occupied six days of work and included a seventh of contemplation of the world's glory, and the New Creation, which came with the manifestation to Israel and the world of the only-begotten Son of God. The record of *this* Creation also included a contemplation of glory (John 2^{11}, *cf.* Gen. 1^{31} and the refrain at verses 10, 12, 18, etc.).

On the whole subject see Abbott's *Fourfold Gospel*, *passim*, and on this particular instance vol. ii. p. 15, and vol. iv. p. 10.

[1] See 2^{23}, 6^4, 13^1.

[2] Greek, *airein*, *to lift* so as *to carry* and so *take away*.

One who should put away sin by bearing it.[1] But it is after our Evangelist's manner to put into the mouth of the Preparer of the way the fundamental article of the full Christian creed. The fundamental article—the testimony which, being received, makes men disciples and even apostles of Jesus, concerns rather His power in *suffering* than His power in action, His *Passion* rather than His active ministry. He takes up and carries the sin of the world. *Behold* this Lamb of *God* and make of Him what you may.

How can anyone come by the ability to give such a testimony to Jesus as the Baptist is here said to give? From the synoptic record, as especially in Mark $1^{10\,f.}$, we gather that the vision of the dove and the hearing of the voice from heaven proclaiming Him the Son of God belonged to Jesus alone. The Messiahship was His own secret, until, near the end, He drew the confession of it from the heart of the disciples. But here, after the manner of the Evangelist, the Baptist sees the Spirit descending on Jesus as He is being baptized, and so is able to bear record that "this is the Son of God." We fulfil the Evangelist's own intention if we take this representation not literally but as a "sign" that no one can believe in Jesus or testify of Him until

[1] Cp. the synoptic representation in Matt. $3^{7\,ff.}$ and parallels. See also the record of John's doubt as to Jesus in Matt. 11 and Luke 7. The doubt had apparently to do with the fact that the Baptist saw in the ministry of Jesus no signs of the work of judgment.

in some degree he not only *see* but also *think* and *feel* with Him. This participation is not only possible, but it is God's will of grace for us all. He would have us so think and feel about the world's sin and our own as to know that only He can bear it who is uniquely born of God and absolutely like Him. Anyone who, coming fresh from converse of soul with God, is able to point to Jesus and say, Behold the Lamb of God, has in him a power of testimony fit to make apostles.

Second Day, Act I, Scene 2—THE RESULT OF THE TESTIMONY 1^{35-39}.—Andrew and an unnamed disciple[1] hear their master, the Baptist, speaking and begin to follow Jesus. They would know where Jesus lives, and He asks them to "come and see." It is late and they are His guests for the night. The one meeting settles everything for these two. Those will be apt pupils who follow the teacher to his own home.

Act II, Scene 1—THE APOSTOLATE GROWS.—Andrew brings his brother Simon to Jesus, saying to him simply, "we have found the Christ." Simon receives prophetically from Jesus the name *Kephas*, or in Greek *Petros*, meaning a piece of *rock*. Some have found in our Gospel an intention to represent

[1] Usually supposed to be John. The word *first* in 1^{41} has been held to imply that, as Andrew fetched his brother, so John *afterwards* fetched *his* brother James. But the grammar of the Greek requires rather the meaning we have adopted, viz. that "his own brother Simon" was Andrew's *first* but not his *last* convert.

a certain rivalry between Peter and the "disciple whom Jesus loved," and to put Peter in his proper (inferior) place. This is perhaps to go beyond the evidence. Peter in these pages is the same impulsive man, so strong yet so weak, whom we have come to know in the earlier Gospels, and here we see him receiving the position of the foundation-apostle from the very first. It is nothing to the writer (supposing him to be John the Apostle) that he met with Jesus before Peter. Simon is *Peter* for all that; and Andrew makes nothing of the fact that he introduces his more distinguished brother. His brother is only his *first* convert. As the curtain falls on this Scene we see Andrew setting off to find other recruits for the Company of Jesus.

Act II, Scene 2.—It is a new day and Jesus is setting out for Galilee. As if to show why Philip should be there, and why Jesus should be said to "find" him (as if He had looked for just such a man), the Evangelist explains carefully that, though Philip was resident in Bethsaida, he yet belonged by birth to the city of Simon and Andrew, viz. Capernaum. The suggestion is that Simon and Andrew had talked of Jesus to their old fellow-townsman, and Jesus, looking in the eager face of Philip, knew that He had found a man to His purpose. "Follow Me," He says to Philip. We come across Philip[1] several times in this Gospel. He

[1] $6^{5\,ff.}$, $12^{21\,f.}$, $14^{8\,f.}$.

strikes us as a man of prosaic type. He has no original thoughts, but he is loyal to the core—always ready, always obeying and even anticipating orders. Churchman and theologian as he certainly is, John knows how much the Church needs such men as Philip. Philip is not brilliant, but when plans are laid and there is something to do and you ask for Philip, you will "find" him on the spot.

Act II, Scene 3—PHILIP ACTS AND PHILIP SPEAKS.—There is not much, perhaps, in what he says to impress clever or conceited people; but Philip has hold of one all-important fact. He is not afraid to speak of it to anyone. And, in fact, letting down the net of his simple expression of the fact, he makes perhaps the biggest catch of all, for he brings in that enigmatic but most lovable and precious man, Nathanael. The Man of Moses and the Prophets, says Philip, is a man anyone might know. He is "Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." Nathanael's prejudice at once leaps up: "Can any good thing come from Nazareth?" Philip wisely does not argue with prejudice. Argument rarely weakens, but often strengthens, prejudice. So Philip does not argue. He says simply: "Come and see." Nathanael came and saw and was conquered. What did for him was the proof that, before Philip came near him, Jesus had marked him and seen the best in him:

"Master, *Thou* art the Son of God, the King of Israel."

Such a man as Nathanael may very well have stood for the portrait of the "disciple Jesus loved." Anyhow, he is the most impressive figure in this drama of beginnings, and though the prospect of the opened heaven and the vision of the glory of the Son of Man is offered to all believers ("Ye shall see"), the man to hear the promise first and to understand it best is the man who can most quickly unbend the stiff knees of prejudice and go to see Jesus for himself. "Walking through the chapters of this Gospel, I should like to keep near Nathanael. For thus, I fancy, I am most likely to catch that light of men that falls from the face of Jesus. By his side I may best hope to catch at least a glimpse of the angels as they ascend and descend upon the Son of Man." [1]

[1] See "An Ancient Preacher" in *Weissnichtwo*.

CHAPTER V

THE GOOD WINE AND THE WINE THAT FAILED

JOHN 2^{1-11}, especially verse 11

AT the close of its fourth chapter the Johannine Gospel divides roughly into two parts, the hinder part dealing with the growth of faith (or *believing*), and the front part with the growth of unbelief and hostility. The eleventh verse of the second chapter may be said to close the first subdivision of the former part. This subdivision deals with the growth of believing in disciples who became apostles. The testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God," is indeed sufficient, if it be received, to make apostles, but it is too significant to be received all at once. Just in proportion to his activity in believing the disciple will ask, How can the Son of God be the Sin-bearer? The answer is that He is the Sin-bearer because He is the Life-bearer. The whole estate of life in the image of God is His to share (though at cost) with whom He will. He is as rich in spiritual gifts and as prodigal in bestowing them as nature is in producing, say, the vine or any fruit of

the field that ministers to man's needs or cheers his heart in the flesh.

It is to bring out this (as it might seem) more positive side of the person and work of Jesus that John has painted with consummate genius for all time his picture of Jesus as the central Figure of a wedding banquet in Galilee.

The narrative is, we believe, intended to be allegorical.[1] The genius that has created such an allegory as we find here may well be thought too elusive to be defined. Yet a word may be said on what we may call the rough material of this allegory. John wrote for the whole world—for the Gentile and for the Jew. It may not, therefore, be irrelevant to suggest two sources whence material may have come to the subtle, sinewy hand of this artist. The one is purely Gentile or heathenish, the other is something more than Jewish.

In the pagan world Dionysus was the god of prophetic inspiration and of the vine. His worshippers were inspired by intoxication. At the Feast to his honour at Elis, the god himself filled jars left empty with wine, and at Andros on the 5th of January a fountain of water gave forth sprays of wine. It is worth noting that the Christian Feast of Epiphany is celebrated at this time, and that in the ritual of this feast in early times the miracle of Cana of Galilee was dramatically repeated. Our

[1] See Note at the end of this chapter.

narrative seems to prove that such methods of proclaiming the cheerfulness and sociableness of the Christian spirit go back to the earliest days of the Church. The Son of God was also the Son of *man*, and He came eating and drinking.

If the feature of the abundant [1] wine (as at a wedding-feast) has a heathen source, the feature of the wedding-feast has its origin not simply in Jewish customs but in parabolic sayings of our Lord. "Why do we and the Pharisees," asked the disciples of the Baptist, "fast oft and Thy disciples fast not?" And Jesus answered: "How can the children of the bride-chamber," in particular the special friends of the bridegroom, "fast while the bridegroom is yet with them? The days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them. Then shall they fast—in those days." [2] Jesus then proceeded to speak of the new wine that required new wine-skins.

It would appear, thus, that while the framework of the allegory is composed of Gentile and Jewish elements, its substance represents an experience of the disciples in fellowship with their Master, and the Master's own comment on that experience.

[1] The amount mentioned in the narrative (verse 6) is said to be equivalent to 120 gallons. See the Commentaries. The author would express indebtedness to Heitmüller in the *Schriften des Neuen Testaments neu übersetzt* in reference to some of the particulars noted above.

[2] Matt. 9^{14} ff., Mark 2^{18} ff., Luke 5^{33} ff.

In the interpretation we may find a starting-point and something more in verse 11. The incident narrated is called a "beginning of signs," not simply because in the scheme of the Evangelist it is the first, but because it contains the principle or purpose of *all* the signs, viz. to point to the Person of the Son of God and to manifest His glory. The result of the manifestation in this case was that the "disciples believed *in* Him." The Greek is literally "believed *into*[1] Him," and in this case, at least, the *into* is significant. It marks a progress in the intimacy of the faith-relation. They had believed before, now they believe with fresh penetration. Has He not revealed Himself? He in whom they believed was no mere official Personage about whom they might learn from the Scriptures. He was One whom they saw and heard every day. He had made life for them a new exuberant thing—an effervescing wine not to be contained in the skins of old beliefs and customs. Let life be emptied of all the past, they had in Him enough to fill it again both for themselves and all the world.

But there is more in the story than the abundance of wine due to the presence of Jesus, and created by His word. There is the relation of the wine to the water in the Jewish jars—in other words, the relation

[1] *Pisteuein* with *eis* is very common in the New Testament. In John, *e.g.* 2^{23}, 14^{2}, 1 John 5^{13}, the usage generally contains a suggestion of progress towards "more intimate" fellowship.

of the new life in Jesus to the best that was possible under Judaism.

Our Evangelist does not leave out of account the relation of life in Jesus to life in the Gentile or Greek world. "Grace and truth," he writes "came by Jesus Christ," and *grace* (*charis*) meant for the Greek that beauty and harmony without which life is without savour. Yet the matter occupying John's most serious attention was not the relation of Jesus to the Greek but His relation to the Jew. There is in Christianity a real relation to Judaism. The wine, however extraordinary in quality, comes out of the water. The Jewish waterpots are therefore an essential feature of the story.

Also, there is a relation of peculiar intimacy between Christianity and what is best in Judaism. A certain priority over the other guests is given to the "mother of Jesus," mentioned only here and in the narrative of the crucifixion ($19^{25\,ff.}$). The fact that she is *mentioned* but not *named* seems to indicate that her presence has a certain representative significance. She represents the best that the old religion could produce. She is on the level of Simeon and Anna, and Joseph of Arimathea, who waited for the consolation of Israel.[1] But how much greater the fulfilment than the hope! The mother yields to the Son. She accepts rebuke without chiding and even turns it to profit. Over

[1] Luke $2^{25\,ff.}$, $23^{50\,ff.}$.

and above this general symbolism there may be the particular influence of the narrative in Matthew and Mark.[1] One day she and the brethren of Jesus stood at the outskirts of a crowd Jesus was addressing. She sought apparently to detach Him from His wearing and dangerous work. "Who is My mother, and who are My brethren?" said the Master without wrath but not without solemnity. "Whoever will do the will of God is My brother and sister and mother." Bathing, as is his wont, the past in the light of its better sequel, our Evangelist touches with perhaps tenderer but not less decisive hand the deficiencies of the mother of Jesus. She is rebuked for interfering in the vocation of Jesus, yet she seems to suggest what He actually does. She continues interfering so as to tell the servants to do whatever He says.

The wine failed even at a wedding-feast. Just when it was needed to carry the festival to a happy end it ran out. And the old religion even at its best, Judaism, with the wine in it of tender domestic joys and hopes, and the body in it of patience and pity for all mankind, failed you just when you seemed most to need it. Perhaps there was not enough of it to go round; or the best of it was not the absolute best; or it was powerless to fulfil its own highest aims.

And if, like Mary, or Joseph of Arimathea, or

[1] Matt. $12^{46\,ff.}$, Mark $3^{31\,ff.}$.

Nicodemus, you yearned, though it were but half consciously, for something that should satisfy at once the claim of God and the craving of the heart, your desire smote hopelessly upon these heavy earthen waterpots of Jewish legalism. Life according to the law might be correct, but its atmosphere was that of a funeral rather than a wedding. The "law was given through Moses"—venerable yet scarcely lovable. "Grace and truth were through Jesus Christ."

We note yet one more point. In all our Gospels there hangs over the bright record the shadow of the Cross. Even when Jesus compared the glad free life of the disciples to a wedding, He spoke words, which clung to the hearers, regarding the days when the Bridegroom should be taken away. In John's pages the prophecy of tragedy (but tragedy with *triumph*) has a sacramental tinge. As we may see clearly from his sixth chapter, he reckons no feast Christian that is dissociated from sacrifice. We may believe then that to him the wine of Cana had the colour of blood. There is that in Jesus Christ which satisfies the Greek yearning for humanness and grace. But the *grace* of Christ goes beyond the Greek ideal. It is the humanness of a Son of man whose home is in heaven, and the grace of a Prince who lays down His life that in and with Him men may have life in abundance.

The croupier remarked to the bridegroom that

he had reversed the common order of feasts by keeping the best wine for the end. That is characteristic of the Christian religion. The best of it is its hope for the end. It does not, like even the best of the old religions (whether of the Greek or of the Jew), suggest a hope which it has no power to fulfil. It is always the way of Christ to keep the best until *now*. If He is in us and we in Him, our best is never a glorified past, or a wistfully imagined future. It is a present possession and a future certainty. Eternal life in the Son of God is a wine that will not give out. It is, gloriously, the best that is to be had.

Note on John 2^{1-11}

Did John intend an allegory ?

That at 4^{46} the incident is referred to as a fact may relevantly be pleaded as an argument against the view we have taken. Yet even if it were certain that the author of 2^{1-10} was also the writer of 4^{46}, we should judge that the argument while relevant is not convincing. An allegorist can hardly be expected to tell us in so many words *when* he is allegorising. If there is no verbal indication of allegory in the incident itself, why should there be in the reference to it at 4^{46}? But, likely enough, the reference in 4^{46} to the narrative in $2^{1\,ff.}$ is one of these "parenthetical additions" which from the time of Lightfoot (*Biblical Essays*) have been allowed by English-speaking scholars of all schools to occur with considerable frequency in the Johannine text. As to the *possibility* of the miracle, we may be

allowed without either irrelevance or irreverence to quote the apostolic maxim: "All things are lawful but all things are not expedient." As to the *likelihood*, it is surely precluded by the temptation narrative. He who would not turn stones to bread to escape starvation would also not turn water to wine to save the face of a host at a wedding.

As to *credibility*—looking to 2^{11}, we find it wholly credible that the disciples believed in Jesus with a fresh emphasis when they found how He had changed their atmosphere even since the days of John the Baptist (who in the Johannine Gospel figures as the "Friend of the Bridegroom," 3^{29}), but just therefore we find it *in*credible that they *believed* in their Master because they saw Him by a word change 120 gallons of water into 120 gallons of wine. The faith that has worth with God or men is not produced or confirmed in that way.

CHAPTER VI

A BEGINNING OF SIGNS IN JERUSALEM

JOHN 2^{13-22}, especially verse 19

THE earlier Gospels tell definitely of only one visit of our Lord to Jerusalem during His public ministry, that, viz., in which He went to His martyrdom. John, on the other hand, mentions repeated visits to the Capital at Feast-times, and for about five-sixths of his Gospel we are in Judea and for the most part in Jerusalem. There is nothing improbable in the allegation of these festal visits, and there are traces even in the synoptic tradition of a ministry in Judea.[1] It may be said, moreover, that the Johannine emphasis of the Judean ministry has a warrant in the fact that even in Galilee (as the synoptic tradition admits[2]) emissaries from Jerusalem dogged the steps of the Prophet. It was, we may fully believe, from Jerusalem and not from Galilee that serious and regular opposition to His cause came even during our Lord's time on earth. And while, as may

[1] See esp. Luke 4^{44} where, as in marg. of R.V. and in Moffatt's translation, read Judea for Galilee.

[2] For example, Mark 3^{22}.

appear, the controversial talks of Jesus with the Jews, which occupy so much space in John's pages, cannot be regarded as reflecting with any minute accuracy conversations that actually took place between Jesus and the rabbis of His day, it will, we trust, appear that they do reflect very instructively the kind of controversy that raged between the Church and the Synagogue at the time the Evangelist wrote.

If we may judge from the space which the record of it occupies, the main theme of our Gospel is the unbelief or opposition of the Jews and how Jesus dealt with it.

The synoptic Gospels place the incident of the driving of the traffickers from the precincts of the Temple at the end of the career of Jesus. This is surely its proper place. It is a challenging act, violent and irregular, yet done after deliberation by One who knows that His hour has come. Jesus could hardly have acted thus, intending further visits to Jerusalem or a ministry in Judea. Yet quite apart from all questions regarding historic sequence, John, we may believe, had reasons for arranging his material as he had done. It seems to us there is a certain correspondence between the "sign" of the water turned to wine and the sign of act and word (2^{19}) in reference to the Temple. Each is a "beginning of signs," in the sense explained above (p. 41). But the one is a sign of

encouragement to faith, the other is a challenge to unbelief. If we wish a word to interpret the sign, the word in the one case might be *transformation*, in the other *reformation*. Both have reference to the existing religion of Judaism. In the *one* case the teaching is that Jesus has use for even the weakest elements in the old religion. He can transform them by His own Spirit. From the still and savourless water of the Jewish ordinances He can bring forth wine that sparkles and stimulates. Let His disciples watch and obey, and they shall see His glory (2^{11}). On the *other* hand, the Temple-sign, if we may so call it, points to things in the existing religion which can be improved only by being reformed or even abolished. It is superfluous in dealing with John's text to dwell on the unlikelihood of our Lord *beginning* a ministry in Judea with an act so irregular and violent as is here described. It is superfluous, because these very features of violence and want of prudence as to time serve well the Evangelist's purpose to give his readers at this point a sign to show that there were features in the Jewish religion that could be neither tolerated nor transformed but must simply, like the tables of the money-changers, be overturned and cast out.

The puritan Jews or Pharisees of our Lord's day considered that the last thing they could be charged with was the introduction of any idolatrous element

into the worship of God. Were they not punctilious down to the last detail of the appointed ritual? Were not even the arrangements that permitted the presence, in the outer court of the Temple, of the sellers of oxen and sheep and birds to be justified on the principle of meeting the worshippers half way and securing the fulfilment of all that the law required?

But there is no idolatry greater than covetousness, and there is no breach of principle or shattering of the foundations of righteousness and faith more thorough-going than that which is involved in the maxim that we may do evil that good may come. Jesus could meet such things as the trafficking in the Temple and whatever defended it only in one way. The way was uncompromising opposition, let it be as violent and illegal as you please. We have the unanimous[1] testimony of the earlier Gospels to the effect that, on the only occasion on which for certain He did visit Jerusalem during His public career, He took this way. He took it with full consciousness of what He was doing, and the provocative act, which made His death historically speaking inevitable, was the attack, sudden and irresistible, upon the usages of the Temple. Our Evangelist has depicted the historic scene after its inwardness with great dramatic power. We see a Figure, of no greater stature than a man, but it is

[1] Matt. 21^{12} ff., Mark 11^{15} ff., Luke 19^{45} ff.

rigid with purpose. We see Him move, swift and fearless, amid a scene of indescribable confusion and consternation. In a hand uplifted we see, not a sword that will kill, but a whip that will sting. We hear a voice not loud, perhaps, but unforgettable coming from His mouth like fire from heaven. And we learn that if either in private or public life men give equal rights in the sacred place to gain and to godliness, neither of these two things can live save by the expulsion of the other. There is a place for gain-seeking, but it is subordinate. One only is supreme. We cannot serve God *and* mammon.

For immediate sequel to the Temple-sign John gives us a reflection of the "disciples." We may be surprised that the latter (who are now, let it be remembered, rapidly-maturing believers in the Messiahship of Jesus (2^{11}), who search the Scriptures) do not recall the prophecy in Malachi ($3^{1\,ff.}$) about the Lord coming suddenly to His Temple and purifying the sons of Levi; but the words quoted from the sixty-ninth Psalm (verse 9) answer the Evangelist's purpose better: "The zeal of Thine House is consuming me." For these words express the attitude of the godly Israelites in Babylon when they hear of the Chaldeans profaning the "holy and beautiful house" in Jerusalem and burning it with fire (Isa. 64^{11}). And after the words cited comes the cry: "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen on Me." The passage

suggests both the agony and the spiritual *worth* of the offence which God's people feel in what offends *His* honour. But it is one thing to read these words in a Psalm, and another to see them springing into life in the action and word of a Reformer, who, careless of the reproaches of men, vindicates thus unmistakably the honour of God. In depicting the passage from the one to the other—the word impelling the action and the action pointing back to the word—the Evangelist teaches a lasting lesson on the genesis of the faith that saves. The Scriptures are our instructor in faith, yet faith is not full-born till we see the Scriptures fulfilled in Jesus.

But the sign that meant reformation had in another quarter another effect. What confirmed faith in the "disciples" awoke questioning in the "Jews." To seek a sign is not necessarily a sin, but it indicates what is at best a weak faith (4^{48}); and to be always seeking more signs heedless of those already given is the mark of a spirit that has turned from the light and is going in the way of the unbeliever. The Jews were not unimpressed by the action of Jesus. Their hearts told them that the Reformer had struck something really wrong in their religious institutions, and they were afraid. But the instinct of self-defence was awake. To their minds, reasoning in this instance not incorrectly, Jesus had struck a blow at the Temple. Looking at that magnificent structure, so long in

the building, they felt that it could not perish suddenly. There must be time, there must be proof of authority: "What *sign* showest thou?"

According to our Evangelist,[1] Jesus did not repel this demand. Swiftly, unhesitatingly, He gave them a *word*-sign, prophetic, enigmatic, a word (we are told) not understood even by the disciples till after the resurrection. In an indirect way we know that there is literal as well as spiritual truth in this representation of the facts. "We heard him say I will destroy this Temple and in three days I will build another made without hands," so, according to Matthew and Mark,[2] the witnesses against Jesus testified. John was aware that some such words were actually spoken. He would give his readers the right version of them. Not He but the *Jews* were to *destroy* the Temple, and *He* was to *raise it again*[3] in three days. "He was speaking," the Evangelist explains, "of the Temple of His Body."

The "Jews" can hardly be blamed for failing to understand what at the time was unintelligible even to the "disciples." Yet, whether they were prejudiced or whether they were more impressed than they cared to show, one thing must have been

[1] Compare the synoptic account, Matt. 21^{23} *ff.*, Mark 11^{21} *ff.*, Luke 20^{2} *ff.*

[2] Matt. 26^{61}, Mark 14^{58}.

[3] *Egĕrō*=I will *waken*, appropriate to a living being. In Matthew and Mark the word is *oikodomēso*=I will *build*.

plain to them even while He spoke : He was comparing the resources that were behind Himself with those that were behind the central institute of faith in the God of Israel, viz. the Temple, and He was claiming for the former a limitless superiority. A Reformer of this stamp may be believed in, or He may be opposed even to death ; but He cannot be ignored. The Temple-sign is set forth by our Evangelist as a " beginning of signs," specially for unbelievers, and he closes his record of it with a remark to the effect that Jesus knew men too well to commit Himself to them. For " many believe in Christ in such a way that He cannot believe in them " (Fosdick). In the next chapter we are introduced to a scene illustrative of this mutual distrust.

Notes

1. *Textual Displacements.*—According to Dr Moffatt and others the true position of 3^{22-30} is between 2^{12} and 2^{13}, and the true position of 3^{31-36} is after 3^{21}. In reference to the former of these transpositions, it is natural to say that Jesus and His diciples *went into the country of Judea* (3^{22}), when in the previous verse (2^{12}) we find Him in Capernaum ; but it is confusing to read these words after 3^{21}, where Jesus is in Jerusalem. The transposition of 3^{31-36} to a place immediately succeeding 3^{21} does away with the need to apologise for the representation that they are spoken by the Baptist. If the transposition is correct, the Evangelist made no such representation. The words, on the lips of *Jesus*, form

an appropriate ending to the Nicodemus episode, and to the treatment of the subject of non-committal faith.

2. *One Sign chosen out of many.*—At 2^{23} John refers to a *plurality* of " signs " made by Jesus at Jerusalem. Their effect is to a certain extent but not sufficiently in the direction of *believing*. " Many trusted unto His name, but Jesus did not trust Himself to them." There is a play on the word *episteusen* (=" believed " and also, if used reflexively, =" trusted himself "). The play may be reproduced in English by using the word *trust* (see the remark above quoted from Fosdick, p. 54). Of the several signs, which John mentions, he *relates* only one, and that one is directed rather to unbelievers than to disciples. But the one chosen may be regarded as a *principal* sign (2^{11}) because it reveals the origin and essence of unbelief, a lack, viz. of the reverence that gives God and His service the first place.

3. *Jesus' Mother and Brethren.*—The notice at 2^{12} is interesting. In the synoptic record we hear of a " house " in which Jesus conversed with the disciples in private (Mark 2^{1}, Matt. 9^{10}). Probably the little company rented this house for a time, and it is not unlikely, though there is no authority for the statement beyond what may be found in this verse in John, that the mother and brethren of Jesus, being disposed at first to follow His public fortunes, were occupants for a time of the house along with the disciples. If so, we may infer from the synoptic record (Mark $3^{3\,ff.}$, and Matt. $12^{46\,ff.}$) that they soon desisted and tried to persuade Jesus to go with them. A man's foes are sometimes those of his own household. Such opposition is not the less but the more embarrassing that it is friendly. There is singular passion in the words in

which Jesus speaks of "hating" father and mother, etc. (Luke 14^{26}) and calls His own disciple "Satan" (Mark 8^{33}). In John the unbelief of the "brethren" of Jesus is mentioned later (7^{5}). The verse, 2^{12}, may be regarded as a link between the record of growing faith and the record of growing opposition. The mother and brethren of Jesus are unbelievers, or, at least, non-believers, yet they are to their own consciousness His friends.

CHAPTER VII

NON-COMMITTAL BELIEVING

JOHN 2^{23}–3^{21}

THE general purpose of this section is to show the insufficiency of a *believing* that depends upon signs: "Many believed unto His name" (2^{23}), we read. And from the words that follow ("seeing the signs which He was making"), we may infer that "name" in this place means little more than *fame*. The reputation of Jesus, as One whose name was associated with such striking deeds and sayings, impressed them. They would not be apart from such power, they would shelter in its shadow. John does not mean that this awe at the name of Jesus is spiritually worthless. Probably he regards it rather as the normal beginning of saving faith, and, further on (8^{31}), he represents Jesus as saying to some Jews who were at this initial stage, "If ye *continue* in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed." But the *continuing* is all-important. Right believing cannot stay at admiring Jesus, it must proceed to obeying Him, for its object is not His power but His person or character. Nothing

will commit the Saviour to us but what commits us to Him. "Hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2^3).

John offers us in his third chapter a particular example of a non-committal believing and a non-committal Saviour in his narrative of the dialogue, held at night, and ending in monologue, between Jesus and Nicodemus. We do the narrative, both of this dialogue and of the many dialogues between Jesus and the "Jews" that follow in this Gospel, serious injustice if we insist on regarding the conversations as in any strict sense historical. But put this passage and much else in John's Gospel in what we believe will be found increasingly by both scholars and laymen to be its true perspective; regard it as a manifesto put freely yet rightly into the mouth of our Lord by one who was taught by His Spirit and knew His mind, a manifesto regarding the difference between true believing and believing of the non-committal type, and it will seem impossible to exaggerate the importance of the passage, or, at parts at least, the majestic beauty of its language. It is in this Gospel that Jesus speaks to His disciples of the Spirit that should lead them into all truth, and says that He has many things to say to them but they cannot bear them yet ($16^{12\,f.}$). The author of this Gospel was, we may surely believe, among the foremost of those who, being led by that Spirit of Truth, said at their proper time

things which our Lord would have said had that time been earlier.

Put in its proper perspective, the seemingly childish question of Nicodemus takes on an important significance. It expresses the real obstacle, continuing to this day, to the conversion of the Jewish Synagogue to Jesus and His Church: "How can a man be born when he is old?" In other words, How can a system or institute that is rooted in antiquity be radically changed? Can it start afresh from the womb of being and still be itself? On this view of matters Nicodemus represents not so much men of the Synagogue, who saw and conversed with Jesus in the days of His flesh, as rather those Jews who some fifty years later looked out from the Synagogue on the neighbouring Christian Church and were filled with perplexity, yet also with yearning. Let us venture, not without guidance from our Evangelist, to put into words what was more or less in the minds of these Jews: "Here are people who seem to have all that we have, and more. They have Moses and the Prophets. And they have besides a Messiah of whom, though He was crucified, they are not ashamed. On the contrary they glory in Him for, they say, He fulfilled the Scripture by dying for the sins of His people and rising again. They say, too, with quiet force things that sting. For they bid us come over and be baptized into Jesus. They

say to *us*, the heirs of the promises, to whom the Kingdom of God was given: *Except ye do this, do it openly by baptism and inwardly in heart, moved by the wind of the Spirit that blows where it lists, you cannot enter the Kingdom or even see it.* This makes us of the old religion marvel, and we ask, how can these things be?"

Nicodemus then, we believe, represents for our Evangelist and his first readers those Jews of his own day who were deeply impressed by the spectacle of the Christian Church and were willing to regard Jesus as a Teacher come from God. They shrank, however, from what seems to be implied in the act-and-word sign of the Temple. They shrank, that is, from a reformation of the old religion of types and shadows through the substitution for it of a religion of reality—the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth.

There is an answer to this wonder and yearning of the Jew, who is on the way of believing but has not yet advanced to what will commit him to Jesus and Jesus to him. Moved by the Spirit that blows as it lists, our Evangelist has put the answer into the mouth of Jesus. And surely it is none the less the answer of Jesus that it is, in literal fact, the answer of the Church of the Evangelist's day. It is that Church's testimony as given by one of its great teachers, viz. our Evangelist, to the glory of the crucified Jesus, exalted to the Cross

but also to heaven, the Son of Man of the prophet's vision (Dan. 7^{13}), who alone has ascended to heaven and will come thence to accomplish the final salvation of His believing people. This testimony can be valuable to us only in proportion as we are able to receive it as the testimony of the Spirit. It is set before us here as the testimony proper to a believing that does not stop half-way, but commits itself to Him who is above all, and finds that He also, the Son of God, commits Himself to the soul that by receiving Him has borne witness that God is true.[1]

Before we close this chapter, let our minds rest for a moment on the testimony of this full-hearted believing.

Firstly.—It is a testimony of experience. Those who are "born from above" know God their Father, and "speak" what they "know." The distinguishing mark of Christianity as the absolute religion is that "you never know what it will do next."[2] You cannot tell this any more than you can tell in what direction the wind will blow to-morrow. But we can tell what the Spirit has done and is doing in us here and now. The Jews spoke of a Messiah who was concealed, it might be, in heaven, and would manifest Himself to Israel when the nation was found fulfilling the law.

[1] See verses 31–36, read after verse 21.

[2] Dr H. R. Mackintosh in *The Originality of the Christian Message.*

But there is no Messiah in heaven but He who came down from heaven and was Jesus of Nazareth. On Him the incalculable measureless Spirit rested. Christians have seen and they bear witness that *He* is the Son of God.

Secondly.—The essence of the experience is being saved and healed through the vision of Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God, on the Cross. In Numbers 21^{4-9} we read of Moses erecting in the wilderness a brazen serpent, and those who looked at that reminder of their sin and punishment were healed. Even so, the Son of Man was lifted upon the Cross "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin" (Rom. 8^{3}), bearing and healing sins not His own. If we have not looked to Him thus lifted up, we have not seen the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, and we do not know the love of God.

Lastly.—It is an experience of moral enlightenment, supplying a test of the quality of "deeds" or actions. There is no man in all the world and in all the ages whose conduct Christ crucified and ascended does not either approve or condemn. Members of the Christian Church have in the sentiment that invests the Sacraments that by which they may test themselves. Do we shun to go in spirit to the Cross of Christ and to remember Him in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood? it is because of some wrong way in our lives, from

which we will not depart even for His sake. Shall we abide in the darkness because we love the false ways, in which we deceive ourselves, but cannot deceive Him? Or shall we welcome the light that reproves our deeds and saves even while it scorches? There is no question for any of us more momentous or more urgent than this.

Notes

1. *The Spirit.*—Note that in Greek there is one word, *pneuma*, for *breath*, *wind*, and *spirit*. This perhaps gives for Greek ears a force to verse 8 which it is difficult to represent in English. We might approximate by making *breath* (small *b*) stand for wind, and *the Breath* (definite article and capital *B*) stand for *the Spirit*, which is presented in the New Testament, as the Power that begets the individual believer and the Church. And we might paraphrase the Johannine passage somewhat as follows: *breath makes breeze as it pleases*. The breeze strikes you, an unseen but very real force. You cannot tell where it comes from nor where it is going to. So is everyone that is born of *the Breath. Why should you marvel at the Breath from above any more than you marvel at the breath of the sensible world?*

The stress of the argument lies on the mystery of the spiritual birth, and the power behind the mystery. The Spirit is incalculable, indescribable, yet most real. It abides in its measurelessness with Jesus (3^{34}) and it is supreme.

2. *Son of Man.*—The scriptural origin of the phrase is Daniel 7^{13}, where One "like a son of man" coming in

the clouds is the symbol of the final kingdom of the saints (*ibid.*, verse 22). In our Lord's time it seems to have been customary in at least some apocalyptic circles to regard the Figure in Daniel as a definite individual, in fact the Messiah. It may be doubted whether He so habitually used the title and spoke of Himself in the third person as the Gospels might lead us to suppose, but it may be taken as certain that the usage is traceable to Him. The New Testament writers show their sense of this by confining the title to His lips. Acts 7^{56}, and Revelation 1^{13} are not exceptions. The former is of the nature of a quotation, and the latter is in an apocalyptic book where the use of the phrase is natural. The phrase occurs some ten times in John, considerably fewer times than it occurs in any one of the Synoptics, but while in the Synoptics there are passages like Mark $2^{10, 28}$, where a Messianic reference may be doubted, in John there is no question as to the official sense of the phrase. *Son of Man* means the Messiah. It means the heavenly Figure of prophecy (Dan. 7^{13}) descending from heaven and ascending to heaven, an eternal Presence there (John 3^{13}). The only instance in John (and that rather a doubtful one) of the phrase containing or suggesting a reference to the humanity of Jesus occurs at 5^{27} where it is used without the definite article (R.V. marg. *and* Moffatt's translation). On the whole subject see the present writer's *Eschatology of Jesus* (Melrose, 1904), p. 145 ff., and p. 218 f.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CASE OF SAMARIA

JOHN 4^{1-42}, especially verse 23 f.

IT is difficult and it is not necessary to regard the principal narrative of the fourth chapter of our Gospel as, in a literal sense, history.[1] But if the narrative is not history, what is its motive? And why is a chapter dealing mainly with the insignificant and even despicable sect of the Samaritans so rich in detail and spiritual suggestion? We begin to answer these questions when we perceive the place which this Samaritan chapter seems to have in the scheme of the Evangelist. The scheme itself is the design to illustrate the processes of *believing* and its *opposite* in reference to the manifested Son of God, and, as we have pointed out, the first four chapters illustrate mainly the success of the manifestation, *i.e.*, the progress of believing. In illustrating this progress the Evangelist has, more or less consciously, in mind five different groups. *First*, there is the group of the *disciples*, who so believe as to attach themselves

[1] See remarks below.

unreservedly to Jesus. *Then* there is the group of those disciples of the Baptist, who, if they understood their own master properly, would be among the disciples of Jesus, yet not unpardonably linger with their old teacher, even though he tells them that Jesus must increase and he must decrease. *Next*, there is the group of impressible persons in the Jewish Synagogue, of the most eminent of whom Nicodemus is a type, who are stirred by a timid yet real "believing." They believe that Jesus is a prophet, and are told by Jesus Himself, when they apply to Him, how much further they must go. *Fourthly*, there is the group of those Gentiles, pure and simple, or "Greeks" (12^{20}), who would see Jesus. John's place for dealing with them is further on. But, now, who else is there? Well, at the point in John's narrative to which we have come, Jesus is setting out from Judea for Galilee, and if He would take the shortest way, He must "needs go through Samaria." If Samaria is worth noticing in a spiritual aspect at all, now is the time to do it. Can it be that there are fields "white to harvest" in Samaria, or that there is anything peculiarly fitted to stir the heart of Jesus and the beloved disciple in the case of the small and despicable religious sect, hated of the Jews, that lingered there? To answer this question we must state, though it be only in a sentence or two, the historical case of the Samaritans. Since

the end of the eighth century B.C., Samaria had been peopled mainly from the inhabitants of five Assyrian[1] cities, each of which brought its own god, yet from the first there was a remnant of Jehovah-worship. "They feared Jehovah and served their own gods" (2 Kings 17^{33}). By the time of our Lord the heathen-worship had disappeared, and what remained of Jehovah-worship was a caricature of the old and true religion, which the orthodox Jew bitterly and, it must be said, justly resented. The Jew could tolerate a thoroughbred heathen, but to be a Samaritan was to be possessed by an unclean spirit (John 8^{48}). And what validity could there be in the pretensions to orthodoxy of people who, like the Samaritans, had been torn from the organism of the chosen nation in the earliest days of the literary prophets and acknowledged no sacred scriptures but the five books of Moses? Could any history be more humiliating than the history of the Samaritans? Could any wells of religious faith and hope be drier than those that had not been renewed or improved since the days of Moses and the patriarchs?

We come back to the question (it is *one* question, not *two*): Why does John linger so picturesquely over the events of this chapter? What harvest does John's Master see on the fields of Samaria?

It is, we believe, an answer to be valued much

[1] See 2 Kings 17^{24-33}.

more highly than a mere conjecture, to say that the case of Samaria serves to illustrate the *double* triumph of the Gospel, the religion of spirit and truth, viz. the triumph over heathenism, and the triumph over a religion that might be correct in ritual and even in doctrine, yet had lost touch with history and the living God. If Samaria were led to "believe" in the Son of God, the proof was complete that Christ could fill the void and repair the waste that heathenism or nature-religion leaves in human lives. It was proved also that through a worship in spirit and in truth He could make the ritual not only of the paltry Samaritan shrine at Gerizim, but of the gorgeous Temple at Jerusalem, superfluous. Samaria, then, occupied the unenviable position of illustrating the worst features of both the Gentile and the Jewish world. When Jesus came to Samaria, as in John's narrative, her heathen record was finished. Like the woman, she had had five husbands, *i.e.* five heathen worships (2 Kings 17^{29-31}). That disreputable past had left its blight. The woman at the well, with her unintelligent arid life, hears of her own profligate history with apparent interest, but with no apparent shame. She is a living symbol of what heathenism is and does. Heathenism is dishonour to God, but men do not know what that dishonour means until they realise that it is dishonour to themselves. Heathenism is a surrender to nature,

a worship of something that is lower than the human personality or spirit. For result the spirit suffers a death, from which there is no rising save at the call of the Son of God. The woman of Samaria had no shame and no pity for herself of the right kind. She did not know so much of the gift of God as to ask for it. All the shame, pity, and giving came from Jesus. What a glory of the Gospel that these things do come to men and communities too ignorant of God to ask for them!

The heathen worship had apparently died out of Samaria because it had killed all it could feed upon. The five false husbands were of the past. There remained the semblance of a true husband in what was still maintained of the worship of Jehovah. But Jesus continued relentlessly: "He whom thou now hast is not thy husband. In that saidst thou truly, '*I have no husband.*'" How could it be otherwise?

Could the living Jehovah own Himself the Husband of a people who had turned a deaf ear to what He had spoken by the Prophets, denying in fact that since the days of Moses He had spoken at all? The Jews of Temple and Synagogue, with all their faults, had heard the voice of Jehovah continuously—from age to age—in the Prophets. They knew at least something of the Being whom they worshipped, for they were accustomed to

His voice. He had spoken to the fathers by the Prophets, and might speak through a new prophet to their sons. If we will follow John we will allow that our Lord might for a moment speak as a Jew, and allow to the Jew a certain superiority [1] in religious enlightenment over the Samaritan : " Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews."

Samaria then was twice dead : (1) Through the blight of heathenism, and (2) through her apartness from the stream of historic revelation. In this state of the case it hardly need surprise us that an Evangelist, who watched keenly the happenings in the manifestation of the Son of God in the world and in the hearts of men, should see in the conversion of Samaria a sign of all that was most wonderful in the " grace and truth that were by Jesus Christ."

The beauty of the Samaritan chapter is too manifold for one cursory glance. It may be enough for our purpose to associate two thoughts or truths with the great text (verse 23 f.) that is planted in the centre of the chapter in order, one may suppose, to summarise its teaching. They both bear upon the question, what Christianity, or the religion springing from the manifestation of the Son of God, really is. The *one* is that Christianity is a *life*. The life comes from God and

[1] See *Notes* below.

retains close connection with Him. Yet it is to the core a *human* life, desired utterly by men when really presented to them, and ever more desired as they feel the blight and ache of its absence. Jesus can do nothing for Samaria, He can do nothing for any place, until He somehow make the men and women of that place feel what without Him they are or are not. It was the discovery in Jesus of One who knew her through and through, and from whose glance into the bare emptiness of her life there was no escape, that went to the heart of the woman of this story. If the note of personal penitence strikes us as rather conspicuously absent, that is because in reality the woman represents the whole Samaritan community. The best to be done with her is to make her a missionary to her own people. She typifies their spiritual destitution; but, taking Jesus at his word, she can relieve it. "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" Christianity is simply a life filled with the gift of God's salvation. And everyone who has the "gift" (verse 10) is by its own constraint a bearer of it to others. For it is a well of water, not needing like Jacob's well to be drawn from with labour, but springing up and overflowing to everlasting life. And the well is, in Jesus, available for all who take Him at His word, and the more available the deeper the conscious need and thirst.

The *other* thought or truth is that Christianity is the absolutely *spiritual* religion. It is the one religion in which, ideally at least, worship is at every point inseparable from life. Christian worship is inseparable from life, because it is the homage we pay to the Source of all that gives value to life. We cannot tie worship to "this mount," or to Jerusalem, to any fixed place or ritual, simply because we cannot tie up in that way the needs and yearnings of our own nature. God is spirit, and we are spirit, and we worship Him in spirit and in truth when we bring to Him that which is, indeed, from Himself, yet is also ours to bring freely. Perhaps the most learned book produced in our day is one that tells in many volumes the symbols men have used for the Divine, and the ways they have worshipped—the "Golden Bough," on which, so to speak, they have hung their destinies. Perhaps it is not altogether an unfitting or impertinent comment on the endlessly minute information supplied in this book to say with the Hebrew sage that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions. John, or the Christ who speaks through John, would tell us that the hour has struck when we should go back from these many inventions to the original simplicity. For "the Son of God is come and has given us understanding to know Him that is true" (1 John 5^{20}). Should not worship be as simple as

the love of children to their father, and as the joy of children in doing a good father's perfect will? Such children and such worshippers the Eternal Father seeks, and such worshippers Jesus by His Spirit brings to Him every day.

Notes

1. *Early Mission to Samaria.*—Such a mission is not mentioned in the synoptic Gospels, and might even seem to be precluded by the prohibition in Matt. 10^5. Neither consideration, perhaps, is conclusive. No one claims that the synoptic tradition is exhaustive. In the abstract it may not be exhaustive even in its record of the public actions of Jesus. Also, the prohibition in Matt. 10^5 would not apply to a mission in which Jesus Himself led. Moreover, Luke $9^{52\,ff.}$ shows that Jesus did not always avoid passing through Samaria, and the "other village" (verse 56) in which He presumably found hospitality was probably in Samaria. A brief mission to Samaria with Jesus Himself as the Missionary—the disciples looking on or reaping where they had not sown (John 4^{38})—remains therefore a possibility. A careful student of the Gospels may for the moment be well content with some such position as the following: John may be an allegorist; he may be a thinker who is also a rapt seer, oblivious largely of sensible happenings; yet he never cuts himself absolutely adrift from history, but works after his own fashion with material common to himself with the Synoptists and other narrators.

That our Lord was entirely free of inhuman prejudice against the Samaritans is more than proved by the

parable of the good Samaritan and the record of the Samaritan leper who returned to give thanks (Luke $10^{25\,ff.}$, $17^{12\,ff.}$).

2. *Allegory in John* 4.—Yet for our part we are satisfied that the narrative of the Samaritan mission, however it may have been suggested by actual events in the earthly career of Jesus, is in the intention of the Evangelist allegorical. The difficulty which most of us probably still feel in accepting such a view arises from our failing to realise how ancient and how prevalent the practice of allegorising (and that, so to speak, without warning) was. The present writer has felt this difficulty. He can feel it still, at least vicariously. Hence he does not expect that the views adopted in the text of this book will find even eventual acceptance with many whose approval he desires. Yet those who are averse to the alleged " results " of modern study of the Fourth Gospel may fairly be asked to lay emphasis, not on the points in which they differ from, but rather on those in which they can agree with, the modern critic. Thus, while the " woman " may be a literal profligate—there may have been too many of that kind even in small Samaria—it is undeniable that even for Jesus the topic of conversation with this profligate is not her own case, but the subject, great, yet in the circumstances rather irrelevant, of the rival worships of Samaria and Jerusalem and the worship, come or coming, of the Father in spirit and in truth. Also it must be allowed that, if the woman was penitent, all trace of feeling of that kind is singularly absent from the narrative. It might go some way towards toleration of, if not conversion to, the allegorical view, if those averse to it would compare the narrative regarding the

woman of Samaria with that regarding the woman which was a sinner, in Luke $7^{36\,ff.}$. How frequent, pervasive, and, one might almost say, indispensable the nuptial image, as descriptive of the relation between Jehovah and His people, is in the Old Testament, and how it has been transferred to the New as descriptive of the relation between Christ and the Church is known to every reader of the Bible. (See, *e.g.*, Isa. 54^{5}, Jer. 31^{32}, Hos. 2^{16}, Matt. $9^{15\,ff.}$, Eph. $5^{23\,ff.}$, etc.)

3. *Relative Spiritual Superiority of Jews over Samaritans.*—Some textual critics join verse 22 to verse 20, making it part of the argument which the woman quotes from the Jews. There is no MS. evidence to warrant the transposition. And there is, to say the least, as little warrant of an internal kind. The narrative emphasises the utter spiritual destitution of Samaria, and with the impressiveness, if also the inevitable obscurity, of allegory it gives voice to the conviction that that destitution is due to the twin-cause of centuries of idolatry and separation from the stream of historic revelation. Our Lord was surely Jew enough to express when necessary the truth that every Jew of His day enjoyed spiritual advantages, to which every Gentile, and perhaps most of all every Samaritan was a stranger. On the connection of worship, whether true or idolatrous, with life, see the chapter entitled "The Kingdom of God" in Oman's *Grace and Personality*: "Only as we see that all our battles are inside that great world-conflict of worship and idolatry are we ever truly delivered from particularist conceptions of God" (*op. cit.*, p. 268). See also Skinner's *Prophecy and Religion*, chapter 4, entitled "The Two Religions of Israel."

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND SIGN

JOHN 4^{43-54}, especially verse 54

IN composing the manifesto which we call his Gospel John had to meet the objection that Christianity was not a native of Jewish soil but had its roots in the mud of turbulent Galilee of the Gentiles (Isa. 9^{1}). In answer, John was not content to show, as in effect the earlier Gospels had done, that Judaism, the enemy of the new believing, was just the same thing in Galilee that it was in Judea. He goes, one might almost say, out of his way to show that the effect Jesus produced in Galilee would not have been possible had he not first won fame in Judea. He arrives intentionally *from* Judea because a prophet must bring to his own country testimonials from abroad. And the Galileans received Him, John explains, because they also had been at Jerusalem and had seen the signs which Jesus did there at the Feast. Carefully he notes that in Galilee Jesus goes to Cana, a place, *i.e.*, where His fame was already established by the first sign (2^{11}), also wrought

when he *came from Judea.* When the Evangelist closes his fourth chapter with the remark: "This is the second sign which Jesus made,[1] *having come from Judea into Galilee*," the second clause is of equal importance with the first. For the matter at this point of special importance to John's argument is that the signs, which draw forth faith in the Divine Person of Jesus, would not have produced faith in Galilee had they not first done so in Judea—so far was Christianity from being mere froth from Galilee which the wind had carried to Jerusalem. It was all the other way. Whatever it was, froth or wine laden with the riches of the soil, the new believing came not from Galilee to Judea but from Judea to Galilee. The unfolding of the glory of the Son of God *began ideally* as it was *consummated actually* in Jerusalem itself.

As to this *second sign* itself, we may profitably begin by comparing it with the first. The first sign seems to point to the power of the Son of God acting, so to speak, on the framework or customary form of a religion. Let the *water* stand for the legal system that framed and guarded the Jewish religion. The system was, in a sense, fluid or meant to be fluid. It seemed to provide rules

[1] *Epoiēsen*, from *poiein*=to make. This is the word John invariably uses in this connection. It is better, we think, to render it by *made* than *did*. John regards the miracles strictly from the Divine side. They are manifestations of the Son of God rather than ministrations to the needs of men.

for every occasion of life. It was fluid, but also insipid like water. Life under the law lacked interest and colour. The *wine*, on the other hand, will stand for the effect wrought on this tasteless, colourless thing by the power of the Son of God. Under the breath of His Spirit the water becomes wine. A system of monotonous servitude becomes a life of varied and glorious freedom.

Here, then, you might say, is an effect of a comparatively impersonal nature, pointing like some far-reaching Act of Parliament to better conditions of life for an indefinite number of persons in a still indefinite future. In the nature of the case such a benefit is realised in the first instance only by a very few. Even in that little company of the wedding-feast only the disciples and the servants knew of the miracle. And they knew of it because of their peculiar contact with Jesus. They are kept near to His person. They are to be teachers, as He is a Teacher. And already, perhaps, they feel, though they cannot explain it, that they will not teach in the manner of the Scribes.

Yet even under Christ it is given to only a few to be teachers of others, and to fewer still to build up life on the basis of some new principle that places the total of life and knowledge in a fresh perspective. Most of us have not the shoulders of Atlas to *bear*, or even the minds of philosophers to *think*, the whole world. And yet the Son of

God, the Heir of the whole world, present in it, and waiting to be received by His own, reckons us common folk as His own and waits for us also. We have no world-wide responsibilities. We have no theory of life as a whole. We may be, like this courtier of Herod's, attached to a system of usages and beliefs that we have never thought of relating to the general scheme of things. Yet we, too, have our stake in life and the future. We are fathers or mothers, we are sons or daughters. We are immediately conscious of something that, for us at least, sums up all the values of life. We have our root in the heart of things, and then—something happens that shakes and tears that root.

. . . . . .

In Capernaum, some twenty miles from Cana, was an officer of Herod Antipas, whose son was at the point of death. A week or two before this man, reared in an atmosphere of fanatical Judaism, if he heard of Jesus at all, would probably congratulate himself that he lived apart from the unsavoury tumults of the restless population among whom he happened to be placed. But now there has happened what upsets everything. His own son, dearer, we may believe, than his own life, is at the point of death. What will these decent regularities of Jewish law and ritual—however scrupulously observed—do for him now ?

Is there anything in them, or is there any sign from Heaven that speaks of a power that can cope with death? At the end of his resources this officer of Herod's inclines his ear to the rumours about Jesus. It is, it would seem, a help to a man of his training to hear that Jesus has arrived *from Judea* and has wrought His signs in Jerusalem. He need not, therefore, be associated with unstable Galilee. Anyhow, He is a man credibly attested to have made Heaven speak. With this man, if with anyone, is the power to save that hope beyond himself which he has in his son.

So he travelled to Cana. He was a man of few words and possibly of as few thoughts. He had one request and one argument: the request, that Jesus should come down and heal his son; the argument, that the son was at the point of death. Take the man just as he is in the story; you feel that there are in him a simplicity and an abandonment of trust that must move the compassion of Jesus. Could sorrow do more to break down the barriers that lie between the need of man and the love omnipotent of God?

And yet, while the appeal to compassion was irresistible, there was a flaw in the argument, which compassion itself must remove, even though it should wear for a moment the garb of rebuke. Because Jesus pitied this man and was able and willing to cure his son, it did not follow that He

must walk those twenty miles to Capernaum. The Spirit shed on Him without measure was not limited by space or time. It might use, but it did not need, the medium of sight or touch. It could cure from Cana a boy that was sick in Capernaum just as readily as if the boy in the room saw an eye that looked on him or felt a hand that touched him. One medium, however, was needed, or, at any rate, required by the Bearer of the power, viz. the active believing of the recipient of its favours. In the first sign in Galilee, as we have conceived it, there was an absence of the urgent personal element. The benefit conveyed was obviously so much greater than anything granted to an individual. It was a subtle pervasive benefit, of which at first only the close attenders upon Jesus could be aware. But in this second sign everything turns on the presence of this urgent personal element. This man was not, apparently, on the outlook for any new *common* good. Nothing in his heart heralded a new hope for his nation or the world. Nothing indicates that, like Simeon or Joseph, he "waited for the consolation of Israel."[1] Yet he found in the sorrow that moved his heart an impulse that took him, beyond himself and his nation and all the world, straight to Jesus. The Gospels do not deal perceptibly much or often with the emotions of Jesus, least of all, perhaps,

[1] Luke 2^{25}, 23^{51}.

the Gospel of John. Yet sometimes the emotion seems to ooze up and wet the dry page for us as we read. One may believe that the spectacle of such a man, as is here portrayed, seeking blindly yet insistently something that was beyond all the world, made the water "stand in the eyes"[1] of Jesus. If so, the emotion was the servant of His will to require from this man something more in the way of faith than he had shown: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."

That was a rebuke to the individual man, but it was also the thrust of a Physician and a Prophet at the falsities that had overgrown the heart of Jewish religion. The good of that thrust would come later. It came immediately in the case of individuals of the type of this man. It came immediately, even though the man might seem for the moment conscious only of his sorrow and of the added pain of a seeming reluctance or even refusal on the part of Jesus. He could only say: "Come down, Sir, ere my son die." And then, Jesus having done His surgeon-work, said with surely a tenderness which no description can convey, and looking straight into the man's face, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The man believed His word and went his way and found it was even as Jesus had said.

[1] John alone records a *weeping* of Jesus in a *private* case of sorrow (11^{35}). In the synoptic record He weeps over Jerusalem.

We feel as if we did not need to be told that from that day the man believed and all his house. But let us not fail to learn that faith grows to greater faith, and that in its perfection it works by a love which, passing home and nation, goes out into all the world, yet abides—beyond all space and time—*abides* and *lives* with God.

Note

A certain Basilikos (=Courtier), verse 46.—It is strange at first sight that one belonging to the retinue of a Herod (in this case Herod Antipas) should be taken as a type of Jewish prejudice, or the unbelief that would not be converted without signs (verse 48). For the Herods were of Edomite origin. Yet the representation is true to the historic situation. The Herods were the only family in Palestine who were legally of royal rank. Herod the Great was *Socius atque Amicus Populi Romani* and could use the title *Rex*. Besides the confirmation of their position with the Romans, an object of primary importance with the Herods was the favour of the Jewish people. Herod the Great married the Jewish princess Mariamne, and employed the historian, Nicolaus of Damascus, to prove his pure Jewish descent! (Joseph., *Antiq.* $14^{1,3}$). All the Herods were sedulous to the point of ostentation in the practice of orthodox Jewish customs. In A.D. 41 the Herod who executed the Apostle James (Acts 12), being present at the Feast of Tabernacles, wept when the sentence was read (Deut. 17^{13}): "Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee that is not thy brother"; but the people comforted him saying: "Be not grieved

Agrippa, thou art our brother," and they quoted another verse in Deut. ($23^{7\,f.}$) which admits to the congregation of the Lord a domiciled Edomite of the third generation. See the present writer's *Times of Christ*, p. 28, and Schürer's, *The Jewish People in the Times of Jesus Christ*, 1, 2, 157. An inscription found by Waddington describes the last-named Herod as *Philokaisar Eusebes kai Philoromaios*="The Pious Friend of Cæsar and the Romans" and refers to him as "The Great King Agrippa." Even, then, if it were held probable that the narrative in John $4^{46\,ff.}$ is a Johannine adaptation of Matt $8^{5\,ff.}$, Luke $7^{1\,ff.}$, it would still be possible to hold that it is in a valuable sense true to history. The differences between the two narratives are obvious: In the one case a *courtier*, in the other a *centurion*; in the one a *Jew*, in the other a *Roman*; in the one *taunted* with his *unbelief*, in the other *commended* for his *faith*.

CHAPTER X

STAGNANCY STIRRED: A SIGN AT A POOL

JOHN 5 and 7^{15-24}

SINCE the beginning of this Gospel we have been familiar with water, whether for dipping in or drinking, as the symbol of true life from above. In Palestine, as in other lands of hot suns, spring wells were from time immemorial sacred places. There the god dwelt. There from time to time—if the spring were intermittent—he showed himself. The Jew could not materialise Jehovah in this way. Yet he built altars by the old well-sanctuaries of Canaan, and, when the spring gushed, he said that the "angel of Jehovah" had stirred the water. Later even than our Lord's day, just such crowds as John describes (verse 3) gathered round these ancient well-sanctuaries waiting for the moving of the water. More than probably, the Evangelist means the Pool of Bethesda to stand for that spiritual salvation—that movement of the water of life—for which the average serious Jew of our Lord's day and of his still hoped with a certain pathetic persistence. The narrative of the impotent

man, taken literally, yields and yields easily much spiritual profit, though perhaps hardly so much as and certainly not more than the corresponding narrative in the synoptic record,[1] which, of course, no one proposes to take otherwise than as the narrative of an actual event. But, taken in a way we for our part believe to be more in accordance with the real, though veiled, intention of the Evangelist, it acquires an interest which is wider and not less profound. What was it that paralysed and made impotent that old religion of the Jews, which as it meets us in the Old Testament strikes us to this day as so living and virile? John will answer this question for us, if we will allow him, through the "sign" of this chapter and the discussion following on its performance.

The tragedy of the impotent man's case lay in his being separated from the spring of salvation. He lay near it, yet could not get at it. His separation was not diminished, but only proved, by his pathetic dependence on others to put him into the water. The help always failed him at the moment of need. The spiritual point is that it must always fail him simply because it depended on others and not on himself. Even the Son of God cannot help him except through his own will (verse 6). The man was cured, but not, in the first instance, by new power miraculously given to his body, but

[1] Matt. $9^{1\,ff.}$, Mark $2^{1\,ff.}$.

simply by the working of his own sincere will to be made whole, and to deal henceforth at first hand and through no medium but his own believing with the things of God and His salvation. The Law and the Prophets, by all means!—even, if you will, an emphasis on the Law—yet only as they help a man to realise the presence of One greater, not a servant, but a Son, and to hear and obey His voice.

We may regard the impotent man, then, as a type of Jews on the way to conversion from legal Judaism. He represents serious-minded Jews of the common folk, whom our Lord in His day and later His inspired successors sought to release from dependence upon teachers of the Law who were blinder than themselves. Jesus would give them in Himself what they half-consciously sought access to—the water of life. We owe largely to our Evangelist the knowledge that, both in our Lord's day and later, there were Jews who stood, as it were, on the fringe of the Synagogue, ready to be detached from it and to follow Jesus only.

The narrative is not without a hint that Jews of this class occupied rather precarious ground. There is always a danger—exemplified notably by St Paul's Galatians—of men connected by so many ties with the routine of the Jewish law forging again involuntarily the chains of the old bondage. It strikes us at a first view as a hopeful sign that

Jesus "afterwards" found the healed man "in the Temple." But if the narrative of the "sign" is to be taken allegorically, this is certainly not what the Evangelist would express. His meaning is rather the reverse. The Temple stands in his pages for something that Jesus is going to destroy: "Thou art made whole: sin no more lest, a worse thing come unto thee." It looks as if standing in the shadow of that magnificent pile meant to open heaven to men, yet somehow shutting it off from them, the Lord were saying: "Now that you have your liberty, do not risk coming within the shadow of this tyranny. See to it that the ruin to which this Temple is doomed be not the ruin also of your own soul. There is a worse thing than being in bondage for thirty-eight years," viz., to go back to bondage of one's own accord after being set free.

The discussion narrated in this section as taking place between Jesus and the Jews is in reality a doctrinal monologue in which our Lord is represented as setting His seal to the positions which the Church of the Evangelist's day maintained against the Synagogue. The points of the Synagogue's attack were mainly three: *First*, that Christianity broke the Law, especially the law of the Sabbath, which surely was a distinguishing feature of God's people, a sign between Jehovah and His Chosen (Ezek. 20^{20}). *Second*, that Christianity exalted Jesus to equality with God.

Christians called Jesus the Son and God the Father. And by *Son* they clearly meant a closer and loftier relation than is implied, *e.g.* in speaking of Israel or the king of Israel as Jehovah's son (Ps. 2^7, 2 Sam. 7^{14}). It meant that He was to all intents equal with God (verse 18). He could pardon or judge sin. He could abrogate law. He could dispense life and all the gifts of God (see especially verses 21–26). *Third*, that He who taught such things set Scripture at defiance. To make such claims for Jesus set Him above Moses and the Prophets.

These are high-sounding charges against our faith. They have had their echo in all subsequent ages down to our own time. That is what gives them and the answer to them—for both may be found here—such perennial interest.

The principal thing, perhaps, to be done with these charges is to *admit* them, and to accept responsibility. Christianity *does* set up liberty against law. It *does* make Jesus to all practical intents equal with God. And it *does* claim for Him more than anything that is explicitly said about the Messiah in the Old Testament. If this is so, our business at present will be to note the ways in which this great *admission* is made in the section of the Johannine Gospel now before us. In the treatment of the *first* matter, that, viz., of liberty in reference to the Sabbath, one notices a certain

advance upon the position taken in the earlier Gospels. There is, indeed, the same exposure of the inconsistency and moral blindness of the legalists. If the eighth day after a boy is born should be the Sabbath, you still do the "work" of circumcising him. You "break" the Sabbath in order to "keep" the law of circumcision. Yet you will not let Me break it, in order, not to "mutilate" [1] a man, but to make him "every whit whole." But it is noticeable that Jesus does not, as in the earlier Gospels, say anything suggestive of the value of the Sabbatic institution, if it were used in the spirit of freedom. He is content to say loftily that the Father and the Son do not observe a Sabbath (5^{17}). There is an historical reason for this. When John wrote, the Church felt secure in the possession of its own "Lord's Day." [2] It did not need the Jewish Sabbath and wished to be rid of it altogether. Certainly, Jewish Sabbatarianism is held up here to emphatic contempt. And the Jewish Sabbath is characteristic of the religion of the Law. If that religion cannot heal one sick man; if with all its five porticoes to the well of salvation it can bring such a man only to the brink of the well but cannot put him in; and if, when he *is* healed by a Power he feels

[1] See Phil. 3^{2}, "the concision," and compare John $7^{23\,f.}$.

[2] Rev. 1^{10}. Whether or not the New Testament Apocalypse has anything to do with the Apostle John, it is certainly an earlier writing than the Fourth Gospel.

to be almighty and a Voice he is constrained to obey, all that *that* religion and that Law have to say to him is that he must not carry his bed because it is the Sabbath-day—*then let us have done with that religion and its Law altogether.* In Heaven, and in all their work on earth, God and His Son keep neither Sabbath nor feast-day. In their name let us men claim the same freedom.

The *second* charge is that Jesus makes Himself equal with God. According to our Evangelist, Jesus to all intents pleads guilty. Life, death, judgment, the destiny of men—all are given into His hand, so that the Son as well as the Father has life in Himself. Jesus asserts His status unflinchingly, but He defends it with arguments that appeal to men because they are what we commonly call moral arguments. The dignity of the Son of God is the dignity proper to His *character.* Thus : He is Judge of men because He is Son of Man, and so man's perfect Brother. He is honoured by the Father because He seeks, not His own honour, but the Father's will. And He claims the allegiance of men, not because even such a " burning and shining light " as John the Baptist bears witness of Him, but because His own works show that He came forth from the Father.

This defence of what we commonly call the *divinity* of Jesus stands to this day. And our Evangelist claims with essential justice that it is

Jesus' own. All the honour Jesus asks for is that we judge Him by Himself and His works. And if we cannot give Him this honour, if we cannot look on Him and His achievement in the Christian centuries with a moral appreciation amounting to worship, this section tells us that the reason is that we have no knowledge of a life so *God-ward* in aim and experience as His. How *can* we believe in Him if we never get above the level of seeking honour one from another, and never rise to seeking the honour that comes from God only ?

The *third* charge is to the effect that the claims of Jesus go beyond the Scriptures (the Old Testament) and therefore set aside their authority. The matter involved in this charge is, like that of the others, of capital importance. But it is both too large and too detailed, as well as, perhaps, also too subtle, to be discussed with any fulness here. We must be content with pointing out the plausibleness of the charge, and how it may be (to speak paradoxically) both admitted and refuted. As to the *plausibleness*, Jesus claimed independence of the testimony of the Baptist, and those who, like the Jews, had believed the Baptist to be a prophet and yet had rejected his message were not fitted to be His critics. But the relation of Jesus and His followers to the Scriptures was another matter. If in the time of our Evangelist, and also in the latter days of Jesus Himself, Jews were

being asked to accept Jesus as the Messiah, such Jews had certainly the right to ask whether and how far what was claimed for Jesus, or what He claimed for Himself, corresponded with what was prophesied about the Messiah. A full answer to this question would involve the discussion of intricate questions of interpretation. We have good reason, happily, apart from want of equipment, for sparing ourselves the hazard of such a discussion. We will, however, venture on the admission that, *if* the Jews of our Lord's day or the Evangelist's had raised in earnest the above question, they would have had at least an arguable case for a negative answer. For it would be difficult—for our part we believe it would be impossible—to prove that the Messiah is ever in the Old Testament, if we may so say, *equated* with Jehovah. But in reality there is no likelihood that the Jews of those days ever raised such a question. And even if they did raise it, there is no likelihood that they would have seriously objected to the loftiest conception of the Messiah of Scripture. They objected to Jesus, not because He was (in *His own* view) a loftier Personage than the Scriptural Messiah, but because He was (in *their* view) of unspeakably less dignity.

We, therefore, exempt ourselves from discussing the attitude of the Old Testament towards a strict view of the divinity of the Messiah.

Yet there is a question kindred to this, which has from its earliest days greatly interested the Church, and which holds that interest to this day. It remains interesting specially in the aspect of a question between Christian and Jew. It is the question whether on the whole the Old Testament conception of One who should be "a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel" [1] agrees with that conception of the Saviour which arises in the mind when it contemplates the character and career of Jesus of Nazareth. It is neither more nor less than the truth to say that in the Apostolic age, and in all the history of the Church since early in the fourth century, there was not and there has not been any doubt on the part of Christians as to the answer to this question. Between the second and fourth centuries occurred the Marcionite heresy. Marcion was fanatically anti-Jewish. He denied that there was any connection save one of stark opposition between the New Testament and the Old. As the Marcionites were excommunicated, it may fairly be said that the Church has never wavered in its allegiance to the Old Testament as the standard authority on the Promises of God, fulfilled only and fully in in Jesus. Next to the story and testimony of the writings of the New Testament, there has been in the hand of the Church no weapon of the Spirit—

[1] Luke 2^{32}, cp. Isa. 42^{6}, 49^{6}, 60^{3}.

whether for defence or confirmation of the faith—comparable to that other collection of writings which we call the Old Testament. Indeed, we may concede to the Old a certain superiority to the New, for apart from the Old the New could not have been written either in substance or style. This intimacy of relation between the Old and the New and this relative superiority of the Old were clearly perceived by our Evangelist, and, we may take it for certain, they were perceived and expressed, as he represents, by our Lord Himself. He was prepared for the futility of His own appeal to the "Jews" by the fact that the appeal of Moses and the Prophets had been futile also. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not *his* writings, how shall ye believe *My* words?" ($5^{46\,f.}$).

Notes

1. *Plan of the Gospel.*—With chapter 5 we commence the second great section of the Gospel (chaps. 5–12), the general subject of which is the process of *non*-believing issuing in hatred of the truth. Signs are narrated which are followed by discussion. The signs awaken or confirm "believing" in a few; but a mist of melancholy, reflected in the reader by a listless bewilderment, hangs over the discussions with the "Jews," who are impervious to conviction and worse. The melancholy and mystery of the situation come to summary expression in 12^{37-43}. The view that the narratives of the "signs" are more or less allegorical

seems to be confirmed by the perception that the signs and the discussions have a common subject. They stand to each other as picture and text. Naturally the picture is adapted to the text, and not *vice versa*.

2. *Textual Displacement.*—The section 7^{15-24} seems clearly to refer at verse 21 ff. to the miracle of chapter 5. Its true place is therefore probably after 5^{47} as in Moffatt. At 7^{23}, the regular word for *circumcision* (*peritomē*) is used, and not as in Phil. 3^{2} the sardonic word *katatomē*, meaning *mutilation* (A.V., *concision*), but the same sarcasm is intended: The Law, or rather ancestral custom behind the Law, requires this ceremony which in itself is a wound to life, not a healing. You are willing to break the Sabbath for a *wounding* of *part* of the body, yet will not do it for a *healing* affecting the *whole* man. The verses $7^{15\,ff.}$ come in appropriately after the reference to "writings" (*grammata*) in 5^{47}. What can this man, untrained by the Scribes, know about *writings?*

3. *Bethesda or Bethzatha and the Sheep-gate.*—A sheep-gate to the north of the Temple is mentioned by Nehemiah ($3^{1,32}$). The site of the pool, whose name signifies *House of Mercy*, cannot be fixed with certainty, but there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the Evangelist either in this topographical reference or in others in the Gospel. A very full and careful discussion of this subject will be found in Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays*. Verses 3 and 4 are of doubtful textual authority. Westcott and Hort preserve verse 3 and omit verse 4, but the latter or some equivalent is necessary if we are to understand verse 7. Why might not the man be healed even though he stepped in after many others? Verse 4 explains.

4. *Points in the Allegory.*—If the allegorical interpretation is accepted, it will seem probable that the number *thirty-eight* at verse 5 is a reminiscence of Deut. 2^{14}. The impotent man illustrates the spiritual decrepitude that has come on the Jews for the failure to hear and obey the living voice of Jehovah in prophecy. The command to advance from Kadesh-barnea came to Moses when, through the thirty-eight years' delay, "all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from the host." Even so the gospel of Jesus comes to a people (the Jews) at the last stage of spiritual impotence. The "five porches" can hardly be without significance. Probably they are the five books of Moses, which to the orthodox Jew were by preeminence the mode of passage to the Messianic salvation. Though this man haunts these porches year in year out, and especially on Sabbaths, for a whole generation, he does not once touch the well of salvation at the moment of its power.

CHAPTER XI

TESTING BY WORD AND SACRAMENT

John 6, especially verse 4

Though we might very properly describe the events of chapter 6 as a testing of the "Jews," representing unbelievers, we shall take them rather as a testing of the Twelve, representing for John as well as ourselves the Christian Church. The *first* test we may call a test of *difficulty*, in a physical sense. The disciples were willing to feed the multitude. You can read their willingness in the kindly puzzled face of Philip as he tries to reckon how much it would take to buy bread for such a multitude. "We are willing but how are we to do it?" The Master answers: "Leave that to Me." And the Church—so we are taught—is to proceed in her enterprises, not upon the basis of what seems possible, but on the basis of what is needed and of the Master's promise. Philip is an excellent man, but if we wait until he has calculated just how much it will take and has gathered the amount, we shall not go fast enough for the needs of men and the goodwill of our Lord.

The *second* test is one in which a moral or spiritual question very immediately arises. No one doubts the propriety of feeding a hungry multitude if one has the means of doing it. But it is another thing if, after feeding the multitude, I am asked to set myself at their head and carry out their programme. I must ask myself whether *their* programme is *my* programme, and I must ask what it is *worth.* If we indicate the second test by the word *distress,* the reference is not so much to the storm on the lake as to the disciples being *required* to take boat and go off by themselves. The earlier accounts emphasise the need Jesus felt of separating the disciples from the multitude. He "compelled" them to go off in the boat while He Himself dismissed the crowd (Mark 6^{45}, Matt. 14^{22}). John gives the reason of this sternness. The multitude, Jesus perceived, were bent on making Him King even against His will. For His own sake and for the sake of the disciples He would put space untraversable, steep land, rough water, in the way of such folly.

Galilee was a restless place—a hotbed for the swift growth of futile uprisings. The Jewish part of the population seems to have been singularly homogeneous in feeling. They hated Rome, and perhaps at times, so far as policy was concerned, hated Jerusalem almost as much. They were but a section of the whole population, which was largely Gentile. But let them all say the same thing.

Let them say it loudly enough, and long enough. And who will gainsay them ? And here is the man to lead them ! Was it not said that a prophet should come into the world ? It is out of such crude mixtures of circumstance and sentiment—with, in the background, the vague yet ever-present idea of a condition of things in which there will be little work and much pay—that there come those movements of popular revolt that are none the less dangerous and marked with blood that they are foredoomed to failure. From such things the Lord Jesus would keep His true followers free, even though it should be necessary to send them out on a stormy sea alone. It is a peculiarity of our Evangelist that he never represents Jesus as praying in private, or represents Him as using any influence over His disciples that might seem to interfere with their freedom of choice. Hence we do not read at verse 15 that He retired " to the mountain " *in order to pray*, or at verse 16 that He " compelled " the disciples to embark in the boat. Yet as on the whole up to this point he follows the synoptic account, we may perhaps assume that in this instance he wishes his readers to *think in* these particulars for themselves. With a sternness unwonted but irresistible, He disengaged Himself from the crowd. And in the same mood He bade the disciples take to the boat. Not many hours later they perceived that there was kindness in

that sternness and were glad that they had yielded, even though it were with reluctance, to His pressure.

For the present things went badly. The night was stormy and the wind was against them. Was there not, therefore, a temptation to let the wind carry them back to the scene of the day and to their Master? Yet something more than the professional hardihood of boatmen of the Lake kept them at their oars. Deep in their heart lay a feeling that, black as things looked, they must be right in obeying Him. And beside that feeling was the memory of a look on His face that they had never or rarely seen before, when He had almost *thrust* them into the boat. They would rather face an angry crowd and an angry sea than that Face should settle itself into a cloud of reproach and rebuke. Their fidelity was rewarded. They did not turn back to Him, but He came forward to them. Then all difficulties vanished. "Immediately the ship was at the land whither they were going." Thus they passed the *second* test. If they had *helped* where *He* helped, they would also *decline* where *He* declined.

There was yet a *third* test. We may indicate it by the words *doubt* and *defection*. The disciples, we are to suppose, heard the whole discussion between their Master and the "Jews," and they saw the result in the dropping away from Him of many who had been promising followers. We may be

confident in saying that this third test was the severest of all. Consider for a moment the *discussion.* It is a fair reflection of the kind of discussion that went on between the Christian Church and the Jewish Synagogue in the Evangelist's own day, and it has like the other disputes with the Jews in this Gospel a certain dreariness. You feel all through that nothing is going to come of it. There is no yielding on the side of the Jews, and, what seems worse, there is no conciliation on the side of Jesus. The Jews wish for a continuous miracle of bread-giving, like the manna in the wilderness, and Jesus does not notice their request except to say that the manna of Moses was not the real bread from heaven. The Jews then ask for the real thing, and He shocks them by saying that it is Himself. The Jews ask for further explanations: How, *e.g.*, can He give them His flesh to eat? and He offends them to the point of exasperation by laying down the ultimatum that they must both eat His Flesh and drink His Blood.

We may be quite certain that Jesus on earth did not argue just in this way with His fellow countrymen. Nevertheless, this record sets forth two things which both the Church and individual Christians must lay to heart. They both bear on the subject of *argument* regarding what we as Christians believe.

The *one* is that arguments concerning the faith

never convince one who does not for other reasons believe. The reason of this, so far as *we* are concerned, seems to be that faith proceeds primarily not from the intellect, but from the will. Jesus seems here to go behind this reason to one more primary. We are responsible, no doubt, for the attitude of our will, but the Author of the right will, the only Author of the will that brings us to His Son, is God the Father. Arguments may be necessary, and they may be good; yet beside them all and at the end of them all the word of the Christ, whom John knew, stands: "No man can come unto Me except it were given Him of My Father" (verse 65).

The *other* important matter is that in arguing for the treasure of the faith we must be careful not to lower its value or amount. In arguing to convince unbelievers or half-believers, we are apt to suppose that we may be likelier to gain our end if we do not, in the first instance at least, make a full statement of what a man who is a Christian believes and must believe. "Ask for too much," we say, "and you are likely to get nothing." Now this chapter gives us an argument that failed. It failed even on the lips of Jesus. It failed as all mere argument must fail. But the passage would teach, as it were, by the example of Jesus that, whether or not we think we can defend or even prove our case, we must state that case in full.

And the full case as set forth in this chapter and represented symbolically in the Sacraments, particularly the Lord's Supper, includes all the articles which, in the name of John the Theologian, we may here summarily define :

1. The reality of the human life of Jesus.
2. The uniqueness of His Divine origin.
3. The indispensableness of His self-sacrifice in death to the salvation of men.
4. The reality of abiding communion between Him and His people in life and death.

The power of the Church against unbelief, Jewish or other, does not lie in her intellectual equipment. It lies in the fulness and fidelity of her confession of Jesus as the only-begotten Son of God, her Saviour and Lord. If the power is not *there*, it is nowhere. But it *is* there. Balancing the negative statement quoted on p. 103 there is this positive one : " All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me : and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out " (verse 37).

Of all the trials of the disciples recorded in this chapter, the greatest surely was their being made to see the power of unbelief. Their Master might do many things, but apparently He could not shake the unbelief of the Jews. The disciples saw the strength of that unbelief not simply in argument but in action. Their Master's unflinching statement of His claims, so far from softening, only

hardened Jewish unbelief. In many cases it turned half friendliness to total hostility: "Many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (verse 66). Jesus was prepared for this result. He may even be said to have designed it, knowing its inevitableness. He who, according to our Evangelist, knew from the beginning who of the Twelve should betray Him, could not be unprepared for a wider but far less awful defection. But if He designed that negative result, He designed also something far other. He designed the perfecting of the proof of His own disciples. And He was not disappointed: "To whom," said Simon Peter, "shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. We have believed and we know that Thou art the Holy One of God." Yesterday they had all but mistaken the deluded enthusiasm of a Galilean mob for true faith. To-day they know the real thing, and knew henceforth that the trying of their faith was precious beyond measure. Difficulty and delusion, distress and danger, doubt and defection blessed the active faith that can endure proving in all that darkness and look only the more intently on the light that shines in the face of Jesus.

Note

The Christian Sacraments as Tests.—The sixth chapter tells the last we hear of Galilee—exclusive of the Appendix, chapter 21—in John's Gospel. Partly

for that reason it has a note of finality, refusing compromise between Jewish unbelief and the demands of Jesus. Its subject-matter has been fitly described as the " Sifting in Galilee." We prefer, however, our own title. For it draws attention to a matter which it is peculiarly necessary for the modern reader of the Fourth Gospel to observe and understand, viz. what we may call its Sacramental element. It is incredible that Jesus was a " Sacramentarian " in the modern sense, or that a year before[1] the Lord's Supper was instituted He addressed to the Jews and blamed them for not understanding language which before that institution could not have been intelligible even to the disciples. Surely it must have taken time, to be reckoned by years and not days or months, before such language as " eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man " could have become habitual, or even, perhaps, tolerable in the Church. Probably even in our day the language is suffered only because through John it has become *scriptural.* It is a question of considerable interest and importance to ask : What precisely was John's attitude to the Sacraments ? He tells us nothing about their being, as we commonly say, " instituted " by Jesus. Yet, as regards at least the Lord's Supper, there is perhaps more sacramental language concentrated particularly in this chapter than there is in the other books of the New Testament taken together. There must be, we think, a twofold explanation of this twofold fact of silence and speech. *First,* Why does John not mention the institution of the Lord's Supper ? Not because he believed that the " words of institution " we find in the synoptic tradition were not spoken by

[1] Compare 6^4 with 13^1.

Jesus, but because he saw signs in the Church of a tendency to materialistic exaggeration of their value. Jesus may have thought of "institution" when He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me." But the thought had not the rigidity of a purpose with corresponding command. The Evangelist judged that he could not more effectually protest against an exaggerated claim of authority for the institute upheld by the Church than by giving an account of the Last Supper, which said nothing about the "institution." That is one side of the matter. But *Second*, How shall we account for the pointed and imperative, though characteristically veiled, references to baptism in 3^{3} and 13^{7-10}, and the more striking illustration of the same phenomenon in reference to the Lord's Supper in chapter 6? As at least a possible explanation of the Evangelist's attitude, we offer the suggestion that the latter is a compromise between his personal feeling that it might be better for the Church to be without Sacraments altogether and his perception that they were far too deeply rooted in the habit and affection of the Church to make abolition a practicable policy. The only thing to be done with them was to make them as useful as possible for the testing and confirming of faith. On the one hand, they might be made a test for unbelievers, who to John were, in particular, the Jews. Persons like Nicodemus must go further than confess that Jesus was a Prophet come from God. They must receive new life from Jesus as from God, and must prove it by being baptised "unto His name" and using the customary symbol of fellowship with Him. And if so much is required of Jews already impressed by the "signs" of Jesus, less could certainly not be

required of Jews who, like those in chapter 6, demanded further signs. The equivalent of verse 3 in the third chapter is verse 53 in the sixth. Both are *ultimata* expressed in sacramental language.

While the Sacraments were thus a test for those *without*, they were also, on the other hand, in a more pleasing sense a test for these *within* the Church. No story, perhaps (apart from the story of the Cross), was so frequently told in the early Church as that of the feeding of a multitude out of slender provisions in a desert place. John had in the synoptic tradition alone five[1] different accounts. He could not well omit this incident from his selection of the "signs that Jesus made," and it answered his purpose none the less that the multitude were given bread only and not wine. For it is the Spirit that quickeneth, and the *words* of Jesus are spirit and life (verse 63). Probably he considered that in the sign at Cana (2^{1} ff.) he had said enough about wine. The miracle was a sign to the disciples that Jesus only, and Jesus giving His flesh for the life of the world, was that bread of which if a man eat he shall live for ever. In the narrative as John gives it, the disciples obey the Master's word and choose His fellowship at the cost of popular favour. This was their trial of faith, and it was precious. The Evangelist would bless all Sacraments that protected and enshrined such an experience as this.

On the subject of the incident itself, commonly called the "feeding of the five thousand," see especially Moffatt's *The Approach to the New Testament*, chapter 5, entitled, "The Historical Method at Work," and an interesting article by A. T. Cadoux entitled, "The Feeding of the Multitude," in the *Expositor* for February 1925.

[1] Matt. 14^{14} ff., 15^{30} ff., Mark 6^{34} ff., 8^{2} ff., Luke 9^{12} ff.

CHAPTER XII

HESITATION AND HARDENING

JOHN 7^{1-19}, $^{25-53}$, especially verses 12 and 17 and verses 40–43

EVEN prejudiced Jews, whether in His own time or that of our Evangelist, hesitated about Jesus. His goodness, His wonderful works, His sureness of Himself, the amazing vividness and incisiveness of His words, knocked at the door of conscience and heart. Those who would arrest Him were arrested by Him—even Jewish officers (verse 45 ff.), and a voice asking fair play for Him was raised in the learned Council itself (verse 50 ff.). Yet, on the whole, relenting of this kind was rebuked and suppressed. In John's day, the fact that practically none of the scholars of the nation had believed in Jesus closed all questioning with the average aristocrat of the Synagogue. The Church could not leave matters there. Controversy is not in itself edifying, least of all, perhaps, religious controversy. Yet it may be unavoidable and therefore imperative, in which case good will come of it in the end. The controversial element is pervasive in John's Gospel, but it is specially marked in the

section that begins with the fifth chapter and ends with the twelfth. The thing attacked is Jewish unbelief, especially learned unbelief. The learned in the precepts of the Jewish Law were, in John's day as indeed in our Lord's also, the most clearly avowed, and to all appearance the most formidable, enemies of the Christian way. Learning has always a certain prestige. It has the advantage of detailed information. An opponent may doubt the relevance of the information, but often he is afraid to express his doubt, for he is afraid of the ridicule that falls on an "ignorant" person. In this chapter our Evangelist, in the name of his Lord, takes up the defence of the ignorant. It is shown here that the strength of Jewish unbelief did not lie in its possessing any really relevant knowledge; it lay rather in prejudice, and in the deluded arrogance of the kind of "knowledge" that is ignorance of God.

That the learned Jews in John's day had no real knowledge regarding the origin or character of the Messiah is made apparent in the fact that the people can quote contrary opinions, both of which have come from their teachers. On the one hand there was the opinion that somewhere in heaven or earth the Christ was concealed, so that when He appeared no one would know whence He had come. On the other hand there was the opinion, surely scriptural,[1] that He would come from Bethlehem.

[1] Isa. 11^1, Mic. 5^2.

Within the Judaism of John's day there seems to have been no standard of discrimination between these two opinions. But it suited the purposes of controversy with the Christians to emphasise the latter opinion. "Search and look," say the unbelieving councillors to Nicodemus, "for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." And they ask him with haughty insolence: "Art thou also of Galilee?"

Argumentation of this kind proceeds clearly enough from what we commonly call prejudice. And what is prejudice? We might be content to define it as opinion based on insufficient or unsifted evidence. So defined, prejudice may both look and be innocent enough. We all have our prejudices regarding matters on which we neither have nor are bound to have adequate knowledge. But this chapter teaches impressively that there is an ignorance, or a prejudice based on it, that cannot be innocent. It is ignorance of God, and it is due, not to want of information on matters that are comparatively indifferent, but to want of will for what is true and good. In John's day both Jews and Christians searched, as in our day they still search, the Scriptures, in order to settle their mutual controversy, but, after all, the primary way to settle that controversy is not to look to the Bible. Used controversially, the Bible has been all through the Christian centuries—and before them

in the case of the Old Testament—a much-abused book. The primary way, and the only safe way, of reaching conviction regarding the Christian verity is not to look to the Bible but to look to Jesus Himself. So far as a literal seeing and hearing of Jesus were concerned, the first readers of John's Gospel were in no better position than we are. They, no more than we, could see and hear Jesus of Nazareth preaching in the Temple.

Yet neither they nor we can without guilt immeasurable resist the impression of reality and absolute worth which the Person who is presented to us in the Fourth Gospel and in the Three makes upon heart and conscience. We know *Him*. We know that *He* comes from *God*, or else we know nothing of that whose knowledge is life itself.

This chapter of our Gospel seems to present three cases. *First*, there is the case of those who resist all impressions favourable to Jesus and refuse to give Him a hearing. *Second*, there is the case of those who are impressed with His goodness and His power. Will Christ when He comes show more "signs" than this man? And yet they hesitate because of such a difficulty as that of His being a Galilean. And then, there is another, that is scarcely a *third*, but may rather be called a *converted second*. For you cannot make hesitation stationary.

It is either hardened into unbelief or it is converted to belief. In either case it ceases. We must

either move *to* Jesus, so as to rest in Him, or we must move away from Him until we have found a defence against Him behind the rock of prejudice and hostility. We are told here how we may convert the *vanishing* second of hesitation into the *abiding* second of conviction. There is only one way to build a house that will stand the batteries of wind and flood. It is to build not on sand, but on the bed-rock. And there is only one way of building up a life that will stand the tests of God or His judgments and be gloriously right with Him here and hereafter. We must utterly trust and obey Him whom God has sent in the Person of Jesus. We are apt to say: Let us prove Him first and then we shall obey; let us "know" and then we shall "do." That is the reasonable order of things in this world. But the Divine order is rather the reverse: Do and you shall know. God's will is an all-inclusive total, whose immediate point of contact with us is not our intellect but our will. It presents itself to us in the first instance, not as something to be thought about, but simply as something to be done. And Jesus and His Church, Jesus and every man anywhere who "believes" in Him, are the witness to this. John has written this chapter chiefly that we may hear as from the lips of the Lord Himself this testimony: "My doctrine is not Mine but His that sent Me. If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the

doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself."

Notes

1. *Displacement.*—The reader is reminded that verses 19–24 of chapter 7 have already been treated as belonging to chapter 5.

2. *The Brothers of Jesus* (verses 3 and 5).—See note on Jesus' Mother and Brethren on page 55. It looks as though John meant to supplement or correct the impression we naturally get from Mark $3^{3\,ff.}$ and Matt. $12^{46\,ff.}$ that the desire of the mother and brothers of Jesus was to persuade Him to abandon His public ministry. It is very credible that, when remonstrance in this direction failed, it took another line: If you *will* exercise your gift in public, let it be where publicity will be of most effect, viz. at Jerusalem and at the Feast of Tabernacles.

3. *The Galilean Origin of Jesus.*—John could not have been ignorant of the tradition preserved in Matthew and Luke of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea. But the fact that he does not side with those who speak at verse 41 f. shows that he attached no importance to it. On the other hand, his references to the prejudices about Galilee both here and in 1^{46} show the interest he felt in any representation of the facts of our Lord's ministry that really blunted the edge of the reproach about Galilee. The desire to meet this reproach goes a long way towards explaining the stress John lays on the *Judean* ministry. A kindred point is that of

4. *The Visits of Jesus to Jerusalem at the Times of the Feasts.*—Luke 4^{44} (R.V., marg.) may fairly be quoted in support of other visits to Judea besides that of

Passion-week. And if Judea why not Jerusalem at the times of the great feasts? Yet possibly John was guided as much by the impulse of spiritual and literary art as by historic fact or probability in putting the framework of the Feast of Tabernacles round the figure of Jesus in this chapter. If the taunt was uttered that the unlettered Galilean had been afraid to appear in Jerusalem (cp. verses 4 and 5), what better answer than to depict Jesus as *standing* and *crying* boldly to the multitude on the last and great day of the Feast? (verse 37).

5. *The Spirit that was not yet* (verse 39).—John's habit of ascribing words or actions to Jesus *before* His death which are fully appropriate only to the Risen Lord involved him in difficulties that could not be altogether concealed. Men of the Synagogue in John's day observed with no little concern the growth of the Christian Church in their own and the Gentile world. Men like John, on the Christian side, said that it was due to the power of Jesus lifted up on the Cross, and in the glory of Heaven, drawing all men to Him. To this the retort on the Jewish side would be: If He had this power why did He not exercise it while He was still with us and so compel our faith? That question had its awkwardness for John, but he had his answer. The answer is to the effect that Jesus was a Prophet. As such he spoke often, nay habitually, of things in the *future* of the Kingdom of God as if they were *present*. With such passages as Matt $11^{28\,ff.}$ and Luke $10^{18\,ff.}$, and, generally, the eschatological utterances of Jesus in mind, we cannot say that such a view is without points of substantial agreement with the historical Jesus.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

JOHN 8, especially verses 8 and 31 f.

THE first eleven verses of this chapter are not found in the earlier MSS. of our Gospel. They are written in the style of the synoptic Gospels, and one wonders how so precious a fragment could have escaped the editors of the latter. But we owe thanks immeasurable to the eye that discovered it, and the hand that placed it where all can read it to-day. Here and there we find it difficult to recognise the Jesus who argues with the "Jews" in this Gospel as the same who speaks in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But He who bends His head to the ground with the woman, until her accusers are ashamed, who is one with the adulteress in the shame of her sin, and one with the Pharisees and Scribes only in their awed refusal to condemn, is in every attitude and accent the Man and the Saviour whom these writers have taught us to know. The *mis*placed section is *well* placed. It relieves the grey of a chapter of argument that leads in the main only to unbelief and murderous hate.

Our Evangelist writes for both Jews and Gentiles, and there are two matters with which he is mainly concerned in his eighth chapter. They have been touched on already in the opening verses of the Gospel, but here they are illustrated in the impression Jesus actually made upon His own countrymen and the Gentile world.

The *one* is that Jesus is the Light of the *world*. John does not deny that Jesus was of Davidic descent, and was born in Bethlehem. But he does not mention these circumstances as facts, and he belittles their importance.[1] This attitude is intentional: Jesus belongs to the world and not to the Jews only. He came not from Bethlehem or Nazareth, but from God. He was not a teacher or prophet, but a LIFE, *the* life that is the light of men. There are, possibly, in this Gospel sayings put into the mouth of our Lord which it is a relief to know that He did not actually utter. But if by a thousand proofs, valid every moment from His own day to ours, Jesus is actually "the Light of the world," it may be daring, yet it is well done, to make Him say so. It is also well done to make Him say it to those who thought of a Messiah who should belong, not to the world, but predominantly to themselves.

The *other* matter in this chapter concerns the ways of using the light. There are but the two

[1] See Note 3, p. 114.

ways. Men may turn from the light, or they may go to it and walk in it. In this grey chapter there is a predominance of the former alternative. The Jews will not believe a man who tells them nothing but the truth, and their unbelief is a quick-working venom of hate and murder. Such people were not the children of Abraham, still less the children of God. Their father was the father of lies and murder. They showed their origin by hating Jesus just because He spoke the truth. And they fulfilled their hate by lifting Him up on the Cross in the sight of all the world. What if they were to die with that sin unacknowledged and unforgiven? And—more—what if by their very crime they had lifted Him to a glory not with God only but also with men, in which they could have no share? What if they sought God's Messiah as their own, and He hid Himself for ever just from them?

The grey colour prevails in this chapter. For even though we read that, when He spoke about the lifting up of the Son of Man, many believed on Him, the faith seems to vanish in the progress of the discussion. This is one of several indications in our Gospel that the problem of the Church in reference to the Synagogue was not simply the problem of dealing with stark unbelief but, perhaps almost as much, that of dealing with imperfect "believing." There was, *e.g.*, a type of Jew who might agree that Jesus was the Messiah. But he

would not take the next step. He would not say that the Messiah belonged to the world and not to the Jew only, or even necessarily in the first place. In other words, he would not go the whole liberating length of the truth. The imperfect believing seems in this chapter to become merged in the general Jewish attitude of hostility, and so to evaporate. It is as if the Evangelist would say that half-belief of this kind is just as difficult a thing to deal with and in the end just as fatal as total unbelief. In any case, he makes the point that there is no real believing in Jesus that does not progress in the truth as it is in Him. So the sky overclouds again and the half-believers disappear in the dark of uncertainty. It will not do simply to be pleased with Jesus. We must *walk* with Him.

Let us leave the grey sky and close our comment in the sunshine of the promise given to the man who walks in the light. "He shall have," says Jesus, "the light of life." And again, speaking to lingerers in the believing way, He says: "If ye continue in My word, ye are My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." We can conceive an attitude to that great promise different from the attitude of injured pride resenting the insinuation that it is in any sort of bondage. They are poor servants who will not bear a reproof from their master, and

poor scholars who will learn no lesson unless it be at once to their liking. Could any man or people honour the Christ of God in any way short of obeying His words? Could there be an exception in the case where the words happen to cut into our self-love and our self-will? We can surely answer these questions when we think of people who will rather stone the truth-speaker than obey his words. But it is a glad thing if a man, looking with determined eye from the prison of his self-will and prejudice, yearn for a life proper to a *man* that shall be full of peace and power. It is a yet gladder thing if he bring that yearning to One in whom he finds such a life embodied and begs for a share in the holy freedom of the children of God. It is the crown of all joy and manly virtue when, in answer to that prayer, he finds himself free from every desire save to obey One for whom the utmost hatred of men could do nothing better or worse than to exalt Him to the utmost power and authority.

Thus, not by our own will, yet also not without it, through the grey sky of a hesitation that *might* harden to hostility, there bursts the sunshine of the Lord's own almighty love. Let a man seek this sunshine that he may walk in it and live.

Notes

1. *Fluidity in the Early Johannine Text.*—That so considerable a section as 8^{1-11} could be interpolated into

the Johannine text may fairly be considered to confirm a view, otherwise highly probable, that the text of the Gospel was for a considerable time in a rather fluid condition. This accords with the impression we get from 21^{24} that the editing was in the hands of pupils of the beloved Disciple, who did not issue the Gospel till a considerable period after their master's death. The editors apparently took the liberty of inserting occasional explanations. Some of these have struck many critics as not expressing correctly or happily the Disciple's meaning. For our part we incline to think this depreciation of the editors exaggerated. We think, *e.g.*, that 12^{33}, a frequently cited example of their misunderstanding, quite accords with the *double entendre* of the phrase "lifted up," of which there are several examples in the Gospel, one of them (verse 25) in this chapter. There are other things of the same or a similar kind in the Gospel, *e.g.* the play upon the opposites *behind* and *before* (1^{51}), *ascending* and *descending* (3^{13}), *blind* and *seeing* ($9^{39\,\mathrm{ff.}}$). The fact, however, that there are fairly numerous explanatory additions to the original text, due to members of the Johannine School, is, we believe, indisputable. Most of those usually cited, as, for example, 1^{15}, 2^{22}, 4^{2}, 7^{39}, 11^{2}, 12^{32}, 19^{35}, are short and are, we believe, in accord with the thought of the Disciple. But there may be other and longer insertions of which the same can hardly be said. The likelihood that *the manuscript of the Disciple went through a prolonged process of editorial development* ought, we think, to be welcomed by those to whom the gulf that seems to lie between the synoptic and the Johannine presentation of Jesus offers an unwelcome and almost insuperable difficulty. May there not be

room in this editorial interval both for the development of the theological or reflective tendency initiated by the Disciple and also, it may be, for the occasional *unconscious transformation into sensible fact of what the Disciple intended to be reflective homily?* There may be some readers who, like ourselves, will welcome the suggestion as a possible source of solution of the grave difficulties, not speculative but historico-critical, of the narrative regarding Lazarus in the eleventh chapter. A very full discussion of the fluidity of the Johannine text will be found in Bacon's *The Fourth Gospel in Research and Debate.*

We regard, however, much of the author's argument, particularly that relating to the Johannine text, as Tatian may have found it, as unconvincing and unsound. Those who read Bacon should also read Stanton, *The Gospels as Historical Documents*, especially volume 3.

2. *The Argument regarding the Two Witnesses* in verse 17 ff. is hardly one we can conceive our Lord actually using. The retort that the testimony of the *second* witness is just the point to be proved is too obvious. Yet, we may take it, this kind of argumentation went on between Christian teachers and men of the Synagogue at the time the Evangelist wrote, and the result would be just such as is depicted here. If we tell a lawyer, arguing unspiritually on spiritual matters, that he is ignorant of God, we no doubt say what is true; yet there may be no answer valid in the eye of the Law to the question, Where is the Father ? (verse 19).

CHAPTER XIV

BLINDNESS CURED AND BLINDNESS CONFIRMED

JOHN 9, especially verses 39–41

IT might seem as though the subject of this chapter were the guilt of unbelief. But its subject is rather the strength of the case for faith as illustrated by a man born blind, whom, without being solicited, Jesus the Light of the world cures. The sun causes shadows, but its purpose is to give light. There was something in Jesus that thrust into deeper darkness those who were wilfully blind; but one *born* blind attains sight, developing rapidly through exercise to remarkable clearness and ultimately to heart-worship of his Benefactor, simply by following the directions of Jesus, While we have abundant evidence, in the testimony of the earlier Gospels, that our Lord exerted His pity and power in the cure of physical blindness, we believe we are true to the intention of the Evangelist if we regard the blind man as symbolical of the mental and spiritual darkness that inevitably befell anyone who was born and reared within the Judaism represented by the Scribes and

Pharisees. John no doubt believed that One who could open the prison doors of the human spirit and free a man from bonds of ignorance and error that seemed as old as life, could and did also perform the lesser miracle of opening the eyes of a man's body. The synoptic Gospels do not expressly narrate any instance of our Lord's curing anyone who was *born* blind. We think it likely, nevertheless, that such cases would be among His cures. Yet, clearly, throughout this chapter our Evangelist is not thinking of physical but of spiritual blindness.

Whatever may be said about cases of men "born blind" in the physical sense, during the earthly life of Jesus, there is no doubt whatever that in the Evangelist's own time and in what we believe to be his own sense there were men *born blind*, men who could not see the great things of God and of life because no light had ever been permitted them save what passed through the darkening distorting lens of Jewish legalism and arrogance. There were men of this kind, not simply men like Saul of Tarsus, born and bred to be *scholars* of the Law, but men also of the unlettered Jewish *people*, who had been delivered from this dark congenital bondage, and been enabled to hold their own in things that really mattered with doctors of the Law by no other power than that of simple original faith in Jesus. Let but one such case of conversion to the light be established, let it be if possible established before

a court of Jewish lawyers, such as those who interrogate the man of this chapter, and you have an evidence for Jesus so complete that no one can face it and resist it without the guilt of resisting what he knows to be true. It is undoubtedly part of John's purpose in this chapter to show that for those who have seen the works of Jesus, a refusal to believe in Him involves the deepest guilt. For judgment of that guilt He came into the world.

Yet what the chapter makes prominent is not the darkness of unbelief but the light of faith. Let *believing* be once begun in a man, it not only overcomes opposition, but it finds its strength in reaction against it. Here is a man who till a moment ago has never seen earth, or sea, or sky, or the face of man. Here is a layman whose education has been both meagre and misleading, for it has shut him off both from nature and the higher things of the mind. He is in conflict, not provoked by himself, with men who have many advantages and are authorities in the Jewish law. Yet this man, hitherto so handicapped, still so destitute of the higher culture, more than holds his own against those whom he has always regarded as the highest authorities in the greatest matters. And the reason, however little at first he may know it, is that he has heard and followed the word of Jesus. Jesus is both the beginning and the end of his benefit. Jesus comes to him, not because he has asked, but simply because he needs His help;

and Jesus comes to him in the end, that his belief in Him may rise to worship and be complete (verse 35 ff.). But between that beginning and that end the man works out as well as may be what Jesus has given him. His memory is clear. The neighbours hesitate, but he knows *himself*, the man who had been blind. His judgment is clear. He is quite certain that Jesus is no ordinary doctor, but a prophet. And in cross-examination he turns the tables upon his questioners and exposes their incredulity to scorn: "'A sinner'? Perhaps, but—*I was blind and now I see.* You 'know not whence He is'? Yet—*He opened my eyes.* You would hear again how He did it? But why?—unless you would be His disciples." And with this raillery went pointed discourse: "Here is a manifest work of God. Does God aid and abet *sinners*? If this man were the sinner you say he is, he could do nothing."

The Jews could not refute these naïve yet exasperatingly acute arguments. But they could do what in all ages ecclesiastical councils have been prone to do with those who overcome them in argument. They could excommunicate the man, and they did. Whether or not it ever occurred during the ministry of our Lord, it was a frequent occurrence later that Jews who confessed Jesus as the Messiah were put out of the Synagogue. Petty and futile as it is, there are two things which under certain conditions persecution of this kind always

effects. The *one* is that it brings to a head all that is best in the persecuted man. Almost without effort he sees himself at his goal. He finds himself face to face with the One who has haunted him, like a significant but elusive memory, but whom he has not known. But now he *knows*, for the Bearer of that presence, Son of Man, Son of God, supreme in things human and in things Divine, shows Himself as He *is* to those who witness for Him as they *know* Him. This man had *heard* Jesus and obeyed Him. Now he *sees* and worships Him.

The *other* thing that persecution does is to propagate the faith of the persecuted. Why did Jesus come to this man at the first? He came because He was the Light of the world, and because this man was in darkness, and knew it and sought the light. But Jesus never comes thus even to one man without an effect for all the world. He reaches each of us only through a medium common to us all. Yet He comes to divide. For He comes with alternatives: either *He* must be the light of all our seeing, or that light in which we *think* we see is turned to darkness. There is this glory and there is this awfulness in the nearness and presence of Jesus in our world.

Note

The Narrative in Chaper 9 Symbolical.—The indications that the narrative is symbolical are, we think,

unmistakable. On the negative side, one remarks the total absence of human feeling. We are throughout in an atmosphere of theological discussion, which seems to become religious only at the point where the man expresses personal faith in Jesus and worships Him. It is extremely doubtful whether any reference to the humanity of Jesus is intended in the use of "Son of *Man*" at verse 36 (R.V., marg.), even if it were certain that we should not read "Son of *God*." On the positive side, everything is significant of the intention to manifest the Divine glory. The disciples are not rebuked for their cold-blooded question about the sins of the man or his parents, for the question leads up to the declaration that the business of Jesus as the Light of the world is to manifest the works of God. The cure is performed unsolicited. The man is sent to the Pool of *Siloam* because of the Messianic significance of the name. Jesus is absent from the discussion between the Jews and the man, yet the discussion is introduced that He may give judgment between the seeing who yet are blind, and the blind who yet through Him see. For such creative judgment Jesus came into the world. We shall be impressed with the importance of the narrative only as we concentrate attention on its spiritual teaching and renounce all attempt to treat it as an account of what took place on a certain day in Jerusalem. We ought to be content with the clear testimony of the synoptic narrative, as given, *e.g.*, in Mark 8^{33}, that Jesus actually cured cases of physical blindness with compassion and with care, not despising methods of cure that were currently believed to be effective. Tacitus narrates that the Emperor Vespasian cured a blind man in Alexandria by the use of saliva (*Hist.*, iv. 81).

CHAPTER XV

ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD

JOHN 10, especially verse 21 [1]

VERSE twenty-one indicates that the situation contemplated in the chapter arises out of the case of the man born blind, who paid for his cure by being expelled from the Synagogue. We may gather from the Epistle to the Hebrews (13^{13}) that towards the end of the first century Christians, especially Christian Jews, had to bear the reproach that they were outside the Congregation of the Lord. As a teacher of influence in the Church, our Evangelist would often hear the taunt that he and his brethren were "without the camp," and beyond the blessings of the Covenant. The purpose of this chapter is to answer this taunt and, in particular, to show what views of the *person* and *work* of Jesus are involved in that answer. All through those chapters of opposition (chapters 5 to 12) we hear of Jews who "believe" or are in

[1] Verses 19–29 are a probable instance of displacement. Their true place seems to be immediately after 9^{41} and before 10^{1}. See Moffatt's *New Testament*.

the way of believing, but hesitate. It is for waverers of the Synagogue and also for Christians, who may be perplexed by the taunt of being outside the Congregation of the Lord, that the Evangelist writes.

Observe, for a moment, first what the Evangelist's answer to the taunt is *not*. It is not: We Christians are the true congregation of the Lord, and you Jews are not. If John had represented Jesus as saying: Come to the society that bears the name of Christ and you will find all you need, he would have himself committed the mistake with which he charges the Jew. The flock of God were not a community hemmed in, as in a sheepfold, by the precepts of the Jewish traditional Law, but neither was it a community hemmed in by other precepts traced more or less correctly to Jesus. You destroy life when you stereotype it, and a Christian tradition may be just as dead a thing as a Jewish.

The *first* main point in the teaching of this chapter is that the flock of God cannot be identified absolutely with any one visible society. Its possible membership is everywhere, and it consists at every moment of all who *know* Jesus as Saviour and Lord and are known *by* Him (verse 14 f.)—of all who hear His voice and are led by Him to the fulness of life in God. There *are* shepherds besides Jesus, but they must be shepherds *under* Him, and they must

enter the fold and reach the sheep *through* Him (verse 7 ff.). All who appear as rivals, lording it over the flock and claiming for *themselves* such allegiance as belongs only to *Him*, are, in reference to the highest things of God and man, " thieves and robbers." They waste and destroy what is holiest. They are wolves in the guise of shepherds.

If Jesus is, thus, the only absolute Shepherd, certain things are seen, in the argument of this chapter, to follow as to His person and work. As a matter of historical fact, it was after the death of Jesus that there arose a Society naming His Name and conscious of complete independence of the Jewish Synagogue. The new Society was conceived and brought forth by the Spirit of Jesus, raised from the dead, and its complete independence of the Jewish Synagogue was in one aspect the result of the attitude of hostility assumed by that body. As outward facts, these things were as obvious to the Jews as to the Christians. It was the part of the Christians to show that the facts could be accounted for only by a complete reversal of the views about Jesus and about the Messiah taught in the Synagogue. There were two difficulties. The *one* was the death of Jesus. How could One, who *died ignominiously on the Cross*, be the Messiah ? Would not the true Messiah have destroyed His enemies with the breath of His mouth ? Would not God have delivered Him if

He delighted in Him? The answer here is that the death of the Son of God was *voluntary*. He had power to take up His life and power to lay it down. But if He laid it down—He had this from His Father—He could take it again and bestow the power of it on His brethren: "I give unto My sheep eternal life and they shall never perish" (verse 28). The glory of Jesus, therefore, lay peculiarly in His death. Such was the verdict of the Highest. His Father loved Him just because He laid down His life that He might take it again.

But suppose this point settled, there was this *other* difficulty: How did this Messiah, who had such power over His own destiny and the lives of men, and was so absolutely the Shepherd of God's flock, stand to the *one* God Himself or to the Being whom He called His Father? The Christian answer to this question was that He was of the very being of God—His Son by *original* and not by second birth. And this oneness with God included—whatever else—His unity of *will* with the Father: "I and the Father are One" (verse 30). Here was a hard nut for the Jews with their rigid doctrine of the *One* God. We gather from the earlier Gospels[1] that, so far as Jewish law was concerned, Jesus was condemned under a charge of blasphemy. He made Himself to all intents "equal with God" (John 5^{18}).

It would be affectation to say that there is no

[1] Matt. 26^{63-65}, Mark 14^{61-64}, Luke $^{67-71}$.

difficulty in the Christian conception of the Person of Christ. To this day there are minds to whom it is as inconceivable as to the Jews of John's days how there can be any sort of distinction of "persons" or "subsistencies"—two or three—within the Divine Unity. The matter is not argued here logically, but, rather, *experimentally*. The Jews are shown that the doctrine of the Unity of God, while quite distinctly taught in their own Scriptures, is yet not so *rigidly* taught as they supposed or pretended. For example, in the eighty-second Psalm the judges of the people are spoken of under the Divine name, *El* or *Elohim*. This is done at the very moment when they are rebuked for injustice and the taking of bribes. Judges are in the place of God within the limits of their office, and a just verdict from them is God's word. How then should it be blasphemy to apply the Divine name to the Messiah, consecrated and sent into the world to fulfil His greater and more glorious office?

John's Gospel is commonly supposed to take its readers far into the wood of metaphysics. But here is an argument regarding the deepest matter of all in the Christian faith, viz. the divinity of Jesus, that is not metaphysical but experimental. The Evangelist indeed tells us that to believe in Jesus for His works' sake is an inferior thing to believing in Him for His own sake (14^{11}). Yet how shall we rise to the higher things except by the lower?

If it is a maxim [1] of philosophy that "the actual is the rational," the philosopher will be the last person to dispense with experience. Early in Church history John was known as "the theologian," but at a date earlier still he was known as a *Christian*. For we are all Christians before we can be theologians in any sense that signifies. We know Jesus and we estimate Him first and last through what He does for us in the way of deliverance from personal sin and death. Would not our knowledge be great and satisfying even at that? It would seem from this chapter that our Evangelist sought no deeper foundation for his lofty doctrine of the Word that was Divine and became flesh, than a "believer's" experience of the "grace and truth" that "came by Jesus Christ." The believer's knowledge of Christ carries with it Christ's knowledge of the believer, and this mutual knowledge of the Good Shepherd and His sheep is declared by Christ Himself, speaking through the Evangelist's experience, to be the same in kind as the mutual knowledge of Christ and His Father: "I am the good Shepherd; and I know Mine own and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth me and I know the Father" (verses 14 f., R.V.).

Anyone who is disposed to ask whether the Evangelist is not too daring in putting such words

[1] The maxim was, we believe, used by Hegel, though probably it did not originate with him.

into the mouth of Jesus, may perhaps find pause to his doubt in the remembrance that in all the Christian centuries the Church has never been satisfied with any view of the Person and work of the Saviour and of His relation to those whom He saves, less lofty or less consoling than they express. He will do well also to ask whether any lower view would satisfy himself. And anyone, inclined to think that in this line of remark we are depending too much on sentiment, however universal among Christians, and too little on history, may be asked to read with fresh attention the words of Matthew 11^{25-30}, and to say whether there is anything in the words ascribed to our Lord by John which He who speaks in this synoptic passage *must* not have thought and *might* not have said.

Notes

1. *The Two Parables.*—There is a certain confusion, due probably to some displacement in the text which we cannot now put right. It only partially removes the confusion if at verse 7 we read, with Moffatt, *Shepherd* instead of *door* or *gate*. It is simpler, perhaps, to think in, at verse 9, the fact that the entrants through the gate are not simply those who are sheep but also and *especially* those who are shepherds as well, though under the great Shepherd. The Evangelist could not mean Jesus to say that all shepherds, who were historically before Him, were "thieves and robbers." The thought is that no one can ever rightfully enter the fold of God's flock as a shepherd, who does not enter it in

the commission of the absolute Shepherd who is Christ. He who says, "Before Abraham was I am" (8^{58}) would feel no difficulty in saying of shepherds *before* as well as after Him in time that, unless they were thieves and robbers they came to the sheep through Himself.

2. *Temple, Time and Temperature.*—"Solomon's Porch," "Feast of the Dedication," "Winter" (verse 22 f.)—there is a more or less conscious symbolism in probably all these particulars. The Feast of Dedication was held in December and commemorated the consecration in 165 B.C. of the Temple, desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes. Like our Christmas, it was a feast of singular joy and goodwill. But in this instance the feast and the season of the year seemed at war. Even *within* the Temple (Moffatt), and in Solomon's Porch *it was winter*. The last three words have the same kind of suggestiveness as "it was night" (13^{30}). John probably never mentions the Temple without an implicit reference to the saying of Jesus in 2^{19}. The cured blind man had been cast out of Synagogue and Temple, and Jesus also was a stranger and an enemy in the place, built first by the great Solomon, which He called His Father's House. He could make warmth even in winter for simply responsive souls like the cured blind man, but official Judaism, held in the deadly frost of custom and prejudice, would not take fire save at the infernal furnace of hate. In this chapter also, as in other discussions with the Jews in the Gospel, there is a certain impenetrable melancholy. We catch the echoes of controversies between Church and Synagogue that do not end, and of arguments that do not convince. It is the dreariness of winter, the hopelessness of death.

CHAPTER XVI

THE GREATEST SIGN OF THE SEVEN

JOHN 11, especially verse 24

JOHN proposed to himself to narrate seven special signs of the manifestation of the Son of God in the world. Naturally the greatest of the seven is the last. We cannot indeed claim for the narrative of this sign any closer connection with history than we have claimed for those of the other signs. We do well to be content with the link with history supplied by the thrice-attested[1] incident of the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and the once-attested[2] incident concerning the son of the widow of Nain. Let us reserve other matters for the small type at the end of the chapter and proceed at once to the real or spiritual import of this greatest sign. Running through our Gospel there is, as we have surely seen, the contrast between the "believing" and the unbelieving Jew. In the former the believing is at a weak stage and needs confirming through signs (4^{48}). In the latter there

[1] Matt. 9^{18} *f.*, ^{23} *ff.*; Mark 5^{22} *f.*, ^{35} *ff.*; Luke 8^{41} *f.*, ^{49} *ff.*.

[2] Luke 7^{11} *ff.*.

is no believing, and the confirming is a confirming in opposition. The most crucial instance of this contrast is offered in the narrative concerning Lazarus. The two sides of the contrast are represented on the one hand by the sorrowing sisters and their sympathising Jewish friends, and, on the other, by those Jews who went straight from the miracle at Bethany to the hostile council of the chief priests and Pharisees (verse 46 ff.). Lazarus himself has a significance that touches both sides. As a man whom Jesus loved, he is, we should say, an almost ideally good man and a Jew. Yet he lies in the corruption of the grave. Life as it is in Jesus faces death as it is even in such a good man. Not all his good qualities, not even the human love of Jesus, can save Lazarus, but the word of the Son of God incarnate in Jesus can recall him even from the grave. Apart from Jesus Himself, dying and rising again, there can be no greater "sign" or "work" than this. As they see Lazarus, bound with the wrappings of death, emerge from the grave, Jews, not to say men generally, must be either believers or blasphemers. And, beside this contrast between Jew and Jew, our Evangelist here as elsewhere must have had in mind another contrast, that, viz. between Jew and Christian. In the first century and before it Jews were in every place throughout the Roman Empire, but so also by the end of it and earlier were Christians. And

day by day, tentatively or with decision, there were Jews coming over to the Christian fellowship. They were dissatisfied with Judaism. It had indeed a *doctrine* of resurrection and of the life to come, but they sought the Life itself, and they seemed to find it among those who named the name of Jesus. What if that which the Christians said were true? What if the crucified Jesus had really risen from the dead? What if God had thus declared Him to be the Christ, and what if the Life that was life indeed were now and for ever in Him? It was not something of the indefinite future coming to them under conditions ill-defined or impossible, as, *e.g.*, the condition that they should keep the Law perfectly were it only for a single day. It was something that had already come. It came and it remained with Jesus and those who believed in Him as the Son of God. Why had they not seen it before? How were their teachers of the Synagogue so hardened that they did not see it even yet?

We may believe, then, that the narrative of this chapter was directed to the instruction and encouragement of these incipient Jewish believers, and to the conviction, if that were possible, of their prejudiced teachers. Just so, the Evangelist would say, Jesus on earth had instructed and consoled His affectionate but ignorant friends, Martha and Mary and their sympathisers, at the obsequies of

the beloved Lazarus. And just so, raising from the dead, and Himself rising, He had exposed to the world, and, so far as their blindness permitted, to themselves the guilt of the Jewish rulers. Following out this view of the Evangelist's purpose, we can hardly fail to surmise that the principal figure, Lazarus himself, is meant to be an emblem of the Jewish nation under the bondage of the religion of the Law. The body of Lazarus has already begun to rot in the earth. Even when, at the voice of the Son of God, he rises to life he is bound hand and foot with the ligaments of death. But death cannot hold him whose heart is awake to Jesus: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." If we desire from history, as surely we do, a sign of the power of Jesus Christ, hardly a greater can be given than this: *That He should bring as from the grave the old religion of the Jew*, and make psalm and prophecy, yes and the Law itself, speak again with the voice of the Living and Eternal God. How wonderful that He should transform a captivity and crushing of the spirit, that seemed hopeless as death itself, into the glorious liberty of the fellowship and service of God. How gracious, too, that He should make men and women bearing His name, in other words His Church on earth, sharers in this sublime work of emancipation. No power but that which was incarnate in Jesus Christ can call life out of death or

bring a corrupting enslaving mode of thought and practice into the atmosphere of light and health. But it is given to all who see and admire such transformations to share in the work of perfecting them. Only Jesus may call Lazarus from the corruption of death; but on the very edge of the grave you and I may meet the still stiff and straitened figure of this best of the Jews, and at the command of Jesus we may "loose him and let him go" into the world to fulfil the faith and to carry the blessing of a true son of Abraham.

The Gospel of John is a deep well, and we can hardly, though we would, exhaust the teaching of this chapter. Yet a closing remark may help to bring the main matter of it closer to ourselves. If it be asked whether any of us have ever yet attained a faith in Jesus adequate to His claim to be the Resurrection and the Life, we shall all answer at once in the negative. There cling to our faith a certain sickliness and a certain conventionalism. Like Martha, we are too near the mouth of the grave and too aware of the odours of death; on the other hand, the resurrection and the life, while we cling to them with a certain steadiness of lip-confession, are too far away. They are as far away as the last day. We know, like Martha, that *then* our beloved dead, who died in the faith, and we ourselves, living or dead, shall together meet the Lord. But a faith that throws

the resurrection and the life into a future so distant and so incalculable will not solace and strengthen us in the day of trial any more than it did Mary and Martha in their overwhelming sorrow. God's gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus is a nearer thing than the last day or any future. It is not a thing of to-morrow merely. It is a thing primarily of to-day, of *here* and *now*, or else it is hardly a thing provable or comprehensible at all. We cannot build a house in the air, or by beginning at the top. We believe, as Christians, that Jesus roots in the past and that all the future is His. Yet neither the past of Jesus, nor His surely-destined future—neither all that can be with certainty remembered of Him, nor all that can be with sureness hoped for from Him, is the secret or the strength of our faith in Him. We trust in Jesus not for what He was or for what He shall be but for what He *is* here and now, the Almighty Redeemer and Friend, in whose life, as it is even in us, death is already swallowed up in victory.

Religious painters have given John, the beloved Disciple, the eye of an eagle. Christian students of this Gospel may well thank God for the eagle-glance that had read the heart of Jesus and for the daring that has put the unexpressed into the lips of the Holy One Himself: "Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said to her, I am Myself Resurrection and Life. He who believes in Me will live, even if he dies, and no one who lives and believes in Me will ever die" (verse 24 ff. R.V. and Moffatt).

Notes

1. *Raising from the Dead.*—We believe with John that an actual or literal raising from the dead must have been among the signs that Jesus made. It is among the signs accrediting the Messiah (Matt. $11^{4f.}$, Luke 7^{22}). True, the physical marvels are of secondary importance. Yet in their own place they are just as important as that the Son of God should take flesh and blood. How could the Son of God be manifested in this world without doing just such deeds as giving back an only daughter to her father, an only son to his widowed mother, or an only brother to his sisters? The first of these miracles has apparently a threefold attestation, and though the second has only a single witness, most scholars believe that witness to be as old as the authority behind Mark—the latter being possibly the one original witness of the thrice-told story regarding the daughter of Jairus. For all that, to treat the Lazarus-story as narrating a similar, though heightened, miracle that took place at Bethany is, we believe, to depart from safe lines of exposition of the Johannine Gospel. For there are present—

2. *The Usual Signs of a Symbolic Narrative.*—These seem indeed to be partly veiled by the introduction of human touches (notably verse 33 ff.), which are probably due to the fact that in process of time the raising of Lazarus was regarded even by members of the

Johannine School as an actual event. But, if we put aside this veil, the absence of truly human features in the representation of Jesus is apparent. *Everything is subordinated to the manifestation of the glory of the Son of God.* We cannot impugn the lofty principle here involved, yet *we demand instinctively that the manifestation of the Son of God shall not be at the expense of the humanity of our Lord.* Is it like *Him* to delay for two days on *any* ground to go to the bedside of His special friend (verse 4) or to pray, not because He needs to pray but that by His seeming act of prayer He may educate the people? (verse 40 ff.). Groaning and weeping are actions of human love inseparable from the vision of a dead friend. But what meaning have they in One who knows that in the next moment His dead friend will stand alive by His side? We cling, in fact, to the story just because of those features which the story, taken literally, empties of value. Or, otherwise, it is only as we admit the narrative to be allegorical in character, that it becomes as a whole instructive or even tolerable. As in the case of other signs in this Gospel—notably those of the fifth, sixth, and ninth chapters—we have, if we would follow the mind of the Evangelist, to proceed rather from discourse to sign than *vice versa*. NOT, Jesus called Lazarus from the grave, therefore He is the Resurrection and the Life. BUT, Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, therefore He may be represented as calling one who believed in Him even from the grave.

3. *The Historical Difficulty.*—The maxim, "with God all things are possible" is valid in *all* parts of His universe, if it is valid in *any*. We have for our part no speculative objections to the Lazarus narrative.

But there is a twofold difficulty of a historico-critical kind. *First*, Why do the synoptic Gospels omit all mention of so transcendent a miracle? *Second*, Why do they do this in face of the fact that, if John is right, it was this miracle that precipitated the action of the authorities against Jesus? ($11^{45\,ff.}$, $12^{9\,ff.}$). We believe there is only one way of escape from this difficulty. Arguments from silence are on the whole unreliable. Yet it is also true that there are silences that speak.

4. *Possible Starting-point of the Narrative.*—It may not be profitable yet it is natural to ask how the circumstantial story we read in our Gospel to-day originated, and how much of it really came from the founder of the Johannine School. We shall not meet the curiosity further than to indicate the probable starting-point of the poetic process in Luke $10^{38\,ff.}$, and Luke $16^{19\,ff.}$, especially verse 27. These passages alone, not to speak of much possible matter, written or spoken of which we know nothing, afford a channel along which the genius of the Evangelist could proceed with ease to the substance of the narrative before us. We can imagine him creating the parable or allegory. But we cannot imagine him self-deceived and treating it as history. We must therefore regard the after-references to Lazarus in $11^{45\,ff.}$ and $12^{9\,ff.}$ as editorial additions.

CHAPTER XVII

"THE WORLD IS GONE AFTER HIM"

JOHN 12^{19}, cp. 12^{32}; [1] 11^{45}–12^{50}

AT the Passover in a real enough sense the "world" came to Jerusalem. It was probably this circumstance that allowed John, if one may so say, to overhear the Pharisees confessing among themselves that the world, bewitched by His "signs," had gone after Jesus. Yet in the speech of the Pharisees the *world* meant only the Jews. John feels it necessary to indicate that even at this time the world that went after Jesus was more than that. And he does it very specially by his narrative of the Greeks [2] or Gentiles [2] who would see Jesus. Like the narrative regarding Nicodemus ($3^{1\,ff.}$), that of the visit of the Greeks passes into monologue. The interest does not lie in what happened either to Nicodemus or the Greeks, but in the significance

[1] Note that if, with Dr Moffatt, we insert $12^{44\text{-}50}$ between 12^{36a} and 12^{36b}, we avoid the awkwardness of reintroducing Jesus, as at verse 44, without explanation as publicly speaking, when at 36*b* He has gone into hiding.

[2] These terms are practically synonymous in the New Testament. Yet it is likely enough that the Evangelist thought of Greek philosophers or at least of persons of Hellenic culture.

of such visits to the mind of Jesus. Both contained a prospect favourable to Him, in the one case of overcoming Jewish prejudice, in the other of winning the world. It is worth noting that the wider prospect is also the surer. In the case of Nicodemus, as in this twelfth chapter when He is speaking to the Jews, Jesus speaks largely in the mood of warning as to those who love the darkness or will not come to the light. Presumably there is love of darkness in the Gentile as well as in the Jew. Yet Jesus ignores it. He has no place in His mind for anything invincible in the mass of men. For He is preoccupied, in these days of preparation for the Passover of His death on the Cross, with something invincible in Himself. We have heard of it already as the will to lay down His life and take it again (10^{17}). His will enlists all power and overcomes all obstacles. He sees nature with Him in the seed-corn dying and bringing forth much fruit. And Nature is but a feeble image of the Spirit that was shed on Jesus without measure (3^{34}). Where is the measure of the power that turns shame among men to the glory of God? It has no measure save in the person and the *action*, which is also the *passion* of Jesus: "*And I* (*Kagō*), if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."

The Evangelist, who as early as the third century was described by Clement of Alexandria as a

recorder of "the *spiritual* things of Jesus," leads us with wonderful sureness into the mind of his Lord. The power in which Jesus overcomes the world and dethrones its prince is the will of love, in which He laid down His life. And what is the power of the world or its prince but the power of the selfish will?

It is at this point that our Evangelist finds a use for the record of the other Gospels regarding the *agony* of our Lord. What can even the Holiest know of the power of the selfish will save as it intrudes upon Himself, and how shall He expel the intruder save through what is in Himself, viz. His love for God and man? So, after his own fashion, mystical yet dramatic, representing not the disciples only but the "crowd" (*ochlos*) as witnesses of the scene (verse 29), John describes the struggle, which is scarcely a struggle but a foregone triumph for the Son of God. His account is not preferable to that of the agony in Gethsemane. It is not so close to reality. Yet it sets the music of the deathless triumph on a major key. The secret of the triumph is not mere resignation to His Father's will; it is the positive vision of the "much fruit" of His sacrifice. All was not dark when Jesus said: "Not My will but Thine be done." There was a "joy set before Him" (Heb. 12^2), even the certainty of "drawing all men" to Himself.

Passing by, or touching only in the *Notes* much important matter belonging to this section, we call attention before closing this chapter to one other matter, viz. the appeal of Jesus to the Jews, together with His own and the Evangelist's comments on unbelief. The appeal arises out of an objection of the Jews, the exact form of which belongs rather to the time of the Evangelist than to that of the earthly life of Jesus. Christians spoke of the "lifting up" of Jesus, and they loved to remember that the Exalted was also the Crucified. By the paradox of events the "lifting up" on the Cross had become the true symbol of the glory of the invisible Messiah. He had gone that way to His power with God and His rule over His people. The Jews in the Evangelist's representation do not object to the phrase "lifted up." They object to what, rightly enough, they understand the phrase to signify, viz. the withdrawal of the Messiah's visible presence. If Jesus were the "Christ" or the "Son of Man" why did He not stay with His people? Do not the Scriptures assure us that His Kingdom is to be for ever? In some such way as this, Jewish unbelief formulated itself at the time our Evangelist wrote.

The answer to this objection, as we may read it out from our Gospel, is to the effect that it would never have been raised if only the Jews had yielded to Jesus while He was yet with them. If they

had believed in the light and walked in it while they had it, it would have passed into them as the life of a parent passes into his children. The light would have remained with its own children, and they would never have complained of an absent Christ. If darkness had now come upon them, it was a darkness of which Jesus Himself had warned the nation (verse 36).

We are, perhaps, by this time sufficiently well acquainted with the manner of our Evangelist to feel that when he writes: "These things said Jesus, and going away was hidden from them," he wishes to suggest something more than outward withdrawal. He would indicate a law of the Kingdom of God applicable to the case of the unbelieving Jews, viz. that the light is withdrawn from those who shut their eyes to it. We need the light. We may even yearn for it. Yet it may very well be that, if we treat the light as a stranger, we miss our chance to have it stay with us and to know it as our own.

The twelfth chapter closes with reflections on the persistence of Jewish unbelief. These reflections bear on a problem that is with us to this day, and are perhaps of none the less interest that they tend rather to reveal the problem than actually to solve it. Anyhow, they show that the problem was a very real one to the early Church and that a solution to it was sought in various directions.

The closing verses of this chapter represent possibly the latest dealing with it that we have in the New Testament. They reveal, in particular, a certain anxiety to avoid any solution of it that would shut the door of hope against the still unbelieving Jew. The Evangelist seems to invite us to seek light in three different directions. *First*, there is the testimony of prophecy in regard to the general fact of Jewish national unbelief. John is not singular in his use of the well-known passage in Isaiah 6. We find it quoted in all the Gospels and in St Paul.[1] It is perhaps impossible to free the use of it in these passages from a certain fatalism, which, however much it may suit certain moods and occasions, is at war with the spirit of faith in the early believers and in ourselves. We cannot deny the action of God in the hardening that accompanies persistence in wrong-doing. Yet how shall we throw upon God responsibility for the wilfulness of men? The Evangelist does not persist in this direction. It does not satisfy him any more than it does ourselves. If the Evangelist's first reflections are in the line of fatalism, his *second* are in the line of *discrimination*. Once and again we find him discriminating between shades of belief or unbelief. So here, *e.g.*, "Even of the rulers many believed on Him" (verse 42). Their believing indeed was timid and inapparent.

[1] Matt. $13^{14\,f.}$, Mark 4^{12}, Luke 8^{10}, Rom. 11^{8}.

Still, like Nicodemus, they were or seemed on the way. Here our Evangelist was, so to speak, on open ground, for he knew of such cases at the time he wrote. He knew of men in the Synagogue who would never be right with God or themselves until they came over frankly to the Christian Church. He seeks to *bring* them over by the sting of the charge that they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

There is yet a *third* direction in which our Evangelist seeks light on the dark problem of unbelief. It is that of closer attention to the words of Jesus. Something seems to be gained in the way of clearness, if, with Dr Moffatt, we insert verses 44 to 50 between the first and second parts of verse 36, and assume that that was the original order. Yet it seems to us more than possible in this case that the Evangelist wrote his sentences in the order in which we find them, and that, provided there were any gain in spiritual suggestion arising from the literary disorder, he himself would be the last to trouble himself over the fact that at verse 44 he has not told us how Jesus came out of the concealment into which He went at verse 36. At verse 36f. the Evangelist has said—rather (let us suppose) in a symbolic than in a literal sense—that after giving His so great signs Jesus went away and hid Himself, or was hidden (*ekrubē*) from His unbelieving critics.

But he was not satisfied with this representation, though it was his own. So with a certain characteristic carelessness he reintroduces Jesus, without any explanatory remark, testifying once more publicly to the Jews. The object of this curious turn is clear. It is to vindicate past possibility of blame the character and vocation of Jesus. He came to make men *hear* [1] God's voice, and even to reveal His face. He came not to condemn the world—not even the unbelievers in it—but to save it. Yet if a man refuse to the end the word of Jesus, he will find *that* in the word he had rejected which will judge him of itself. As for Jesus, He speaks only by commandment. He speaks only what He knows to be of God. And He knows that God's commandment is eternal life.

We may, perhaps, wonder whether there is even here a complete solution of the problem regarding belief and unbelief. We may wonder and yet be sure that, however far we may go in seeking a solution, it is good to take rest, with the Evangelist, in the love of Jesus and in His knowledge of the Father. For thus we know, with Jesus, that the commandment, which is also the *gift* of God, is eternal life. Unbelief is darkness. But *God* is light. In *Him* is no darkness at all.

[1] Notice that, while at verse 36 and the foregoing verses Jesus *speaks*, at verse 44 He *cries*.

Notes

1. *The Contents of* 11^{45}-12^{50}, apart from what has occupied us in the above chapter, include : A Council of the Jews, at which Caiaphas advises the death of Jesus ; Retirement of Jesus to Ephraim on the border of the Judean desert ; The Supper at Bethany, where, according to John, the leading figures apart from Jesus are Mary, who offers the ointment, her brother Lazarus raised from the dead and, by contrast, the pilferer Judas Iscariot, who objects to the robbing of the poor (!) ; The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, where both the applause of the crowds and the alarmed resentment of the authorities are connected with the transcendent sign of the raising of Lazarus. Verse 16 in chapter 12 is an interesting indication of the actual practice of the early Church in seeking for proof-texts of the Messiahship of Jesus. It is a fair question how far the remembrance of prophetic texts, that were generally considered Messianic, may have unconsciously affected the narrative regarding Jesus. The operation of such an influence is, we believe, comparatively slight ; but we pave the way for the sceptical conclusion that it accounts for all that is out of the common in the story of Jesus if we deny *a priori* that it has operated at all.

2. *Caiaphas as Prophet* ($11^{51\,f.}$).—It may strike us as strange that the advice of a worldly ecclesiastic should be turned into a prophecy of the atonement of Jesus. But surely we have not read thus far in the Gospel without recognising in the author one who is careless how his sentences may strike his readers on their logical side, yet singularly careful in securing that they produce the spiritual impression he intends. All through since the " beginning of signs " (2^{11}) the water has been

changing to wine. And now we are near the source of the transforming power. For now all roads lead to the "lifting up" of the Son of Man. What voice on earth shall herald according to its meaning the spectacle of the Cross? With all his "sovereign power" (Harnack) John will not invent a herald. He has no need for Caiaphas, but he needs his office. There in the actual history is the "high priest of that year." Let the high priest prophesy: let faith and love interpret.

3. *High Priest "that year"* (11^{51}, 18^{13}).—In regard to the last two words, it has been contended that they indicate an author so remote in place and knowledge from Palestine as to suppose that the Jewish high priesthood was an annual office. By laying a certain emphasis, as, among others, Drummond proposes, on the demonstrative pronoun (*that* year), we escape the need of entertaining the surely improbable supposition that an author of such admittedly profound culture and genius as the Fourth Evangelist, acquainted, like Philo, both with the Jewish canonical Scriptures and the conceptions and language of the current Hellenic philosophy, could, even on the unlikely supposition that he was a Gentile, have been ignorant of elementary facts regarding an institution which for over two centuries had occupied so prominent a place in the politics of the world as the Jewish high priesthood. John felt no particular interest either in Caiaphas or the Jewish priesthood, but he seemed to see the fiery mantle of prophecy descend ominously on the priest of *that* year.

4. *The Retirements of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.*—The material common to John and the Synoptists falls naturally into the divisions of the *Active* Ministry of Jesus and His *Passion*. Between the two comes, as

a *third*, the Period of *Retirement*, whether to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, or to Cæsarea Philippi (Mark 7^{24}, 8^{22}). The equivalents in John to these synoptic passages may be regarded as $10^{39\,f.}$ and $11^{54\,ff.}$. Conformably to his plan of emphasising the Judean ministry, John places the scenes of the retirements not in the neighbourhood of Galilee but in that of Judea. These explicit references are not given for the sake of historical or geographical accuracy. In the *one* case ($10^{39\,f.}$) they complete a circle which begins and ends at the scene of the Baptist's ministry. In the other ($11^{54\,ff.}$) they link John's story with the most significant outward preludes of the Passion in the earlier narratives, viz. the plottings of the Jewish Council, the Passover, the homely scenes at Bethany. John pays the older narratives the homage of outward fidelity, but he gives each incident a dressing of his own.

CHAPTER XVIII

"HE TOOK A TOWEL AND GIRDED HIMSELF"

JOHN 13

OR, as we read in Luke, "I am among you as He that serveth" (Luke 22^{27}). For John has made these words of the earlier Gospel live for us in the scene of the feet-washing. The scene is possibly imaginary, but the words and spirit of it all are more lasting than the sea and the hills. John has done more, probably, than any writer in the world to unite the temporal and the eternal and to bring the life of Jesus as He was in this world into touch with life as it is, or through Him should be, in every age. The union was intended by the Evangelist. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (verse 7). "Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter" (verse 36)—such sayings are, whatever else, pregnant hints to John's readers as to how they should apply the teaching and example of the Lord to the needs of their own time and especially to the problems of the Church.

It is often pointed out that there is a certain

narrowness in this and the four following chapters : Jesus ministers comfort to His own who are in the world, but what comfort is there for the world itself that does not know either the Father or the Son ? Yet both here and in the seventeenth chapter a missionary-reference to the world shines through the veil of the intimacy of Jesus with His own. It is true that at this point nothing is said about the duty of loving the sinful world.

But the Evangelist is depicting the extremity of the world's opposition to the Saviour, and naturally does not put in any colouring that might soften the contrast between light and darkness. He wishes us to see in all its tragedy the figure of the Son of God on earth—unknown, misunderstood, hated. So, for the moment, when the door shuts on Judas and he goes out into the night, the darkness is everywhere except in the room where Jesus is with His own, loving them "to the end," and being loved by them. Yet Jesus is the Light of the *world*. It is for the sake of the *world* that at this moment all the light is concentrated on the room containing Jesus and His own.

Yet, in another point of view—and that one which the Evangelist specially wishes to impress on his readers—the exclusiveness must be considered part of the Divine purpose. It is essential to the manifestation both of Jesus and of His disciples.

Of Jesus: How is God glorified in Jesus? or, which is the same thing, How does God glorify Jesus in Himself? This Gospel gives an answer, which it is better to ponder than to try to expound. The obvious answer would be that Jesus was glorified when the world began to believe in Him. The answer of this Gospel is that the world could not begin to believe in Him until it saw Him completely isolated from itself, the victim of its hate and cruelty even unto death, yet bearing all of His own will, *alive* and loving still those who had hated Him without a cause. Jesus saw the beginning of this glory for Himself when Judas went out to fulfil his crime: "*Now*," He said, "is the Son of Man glorified,[1] and God is glorified[1] in Him." What is the supreme obstacle in the way of faith? The supreme obstacle is, and has remained, that which is obstacle to the Jew—the shame of the Cross. That obstacle can be removed only by realising that the Cross, as Jesus bore it, is His supreme title to ineffable and eternal glory. The law of His being, the heart of holy love toward God and toward men, is here as nowhere else. Thus, and thus supremely, the Son of God has been manifested to the world. And, if the *Master* was manifested thus, what are we to say—

Of the Disciple? Simon Peter and the others could not follow Jesus into the glory of a death that was

[1] Notice the use of the aorist, *edoxasthē*="*was* glorified."

peculiar to Himself. "Whither I go," He said, "ye cannot come" (verse 33). With all His certainty that these loved men would afterwards participate in the very spirit of His sufferings (verse 36), Jesus recognised the solitude of His act of dying. The disciples could not co-operate in a task which the Father had given to Him alone. Within twelve hours the chief of that choice company would perjure himself before unbelievers in a denial of his Master. Yet the choice of Jesus in these men stood. There was a task which only they, and whoever might by His will be their successors, could perform—the task of interpreting Him, the Master, to the world. The task has a look of impossibility. How can men interpret Jesus, unless all the time Jesus is interpreting Himself? Well, conceive it so. Jesus, surely, wills to interpret Himself. What if He also wills to do it through men who bear His name, and whose supreme bond to one another is that they love Him and would be in the world even as He was—separate from it, yet drawing it to themselves for His sake. Surely, to one casting his eye over the Christian centuries, it *looks* as if history pointed that way. Surely there is fact as well as prophecy in the saying which this Gospel gives as from the lips of Jesus Himself: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one toward another"—love of the kind, that *new* kind, which I had to you.

Notes

1. *Contents of Chapter* 13.—Besides what is dealt with above, the chapter mentions: A Supper "*before* the Passover"; Words with Simon Peter, verses 7–10; Words of and to Judas Iscariot, verses 10, 26 f., who is indicated by a sign between Jesus, the Disciple, and Peter. Dr Moffatt introduces chapters 15 and 16 between verses 31 and 32. This gives on the whole a good sequence. It seems obvious that these chapters must come in before the last sentence of chapter 14. Yet we believe that the sequence of thought that we suggest between verses 30 and 31 is true to the Evangelist's intention.

2. "*Before the Passover*" (verse 1).—John consistently represents the Supper as taking place on the night *before* the Passover-meal (cp. 18^{28}). It is, we believe, labour wasted to try to reconcile this with the synoptic testimony. John pays more attention to typology than to strict history. The Passover-lamb was slain at the Temple between 3 and 6 P.M. on what we should call the 13th of Nisan, but the Jew regarded as the beginning of the 14th. John's point is that at the same time, *before* the Passover, the Lamb of God gave Himself to be slain and eaten (cp. 6^{53}). The practice followed later by the Ephesian Church of celebrating Easter on 14th Nisan led to the *Quartodeciman* controversy with the Western Church. But neither that practice nor the controversy had anything to do with the peculiar testimony of the Fourth Gospel as to the day of the Lord's death.

3. *Sacramental Reference in the Feet-washing.*—The references to baptism in the feet-washing, and in the special episode of the talk with Peter, are almost as plain as those to the Lord's Supper in chapter 6

(cp. Note, p. 105 ff.). Questions as to the mode of baptism (immersion or sprinkling), and as to the admission to the Sacraments of persons of known or suspected habits of sin, arose early in the Church. John does not condescend to notice such matters directly. But he deals with them, we may believe, none the less effectively. There is special significance in the fact that the names of Simon Peter and Judas Iscariot are the only ones mentioned. The Sacraments are for the loyal and the lowly minded. Their feet may need cleansing, but the efficacy of their bath of love remains (verse 10). Even Peter, whose fall is prophesied, is among the " clean " (*ibid.*). Only Judas is excluded. Though he partakes both of the washing and the supper, baptism does not cleanse him. If the supper strengthens him, the force comes from Satan not from Christ. Or, perhaps one should say, Satan is permitted to borrow the force from Christ and use it for his own purposes. Anyhow, Judas eats and drinks judgment to himself (1 Cor. 11^{29}, cp. John 13^{27}).

CHAPTER XIX

THE WAY AND THE LIFE

[1] JOHN 14

IN the difficult task of speaking to purpose on a chapter so often read and so much loved, the simplest analysis of its contents will be the best. The chapter treats of the *way* to communion with the Father, and of how to *remain* in that communion.

First, the scene brought before us is that of a farewell-meal. With feelings akin to despair the disciples contemplate the prospect of severance from their loved Master. And the Master is comforting them. "Believe in *God*," He says. Alone, that exhortation might be thought cold comfort. Their enemies, the Jews, could say as much. *They* believed in one God, who could not be seen, and of whom it was a crime to make an image. "The heaven of heavens," it was said, "cannot contain Thee" (1 Kings 8^{27}). There is largeness, but hardly warmth, in such a view of God. Jesus gives warmth to the vastness of space. He begins to do it when He says: "Believe also

[1] Omitting for the present the verses on the Comforter, 16 f. and 26.

in Me." For He is the *Son* of God, the Heir and Possessor of all that infinite power and good for which the name of God stands. The spaciousness of God should not be a terror to the believing man. It should be his unspeakable comfort, for it means that there is space for *him*. What fills the space is love. Every part of it is a perfect home. The whole is a " Father's house " of " many mansions."

It *became*, then, believers in Jesus, and it *becomes* His Church, not only to accept with resignation the fact that He has gone away from the visible world, but to rejoice because He has gone to the Father. " My Father," said Jesus, " is greater than I " (verse 28). The meaning does not seem to be that the Father is greater than the Word that was made flesh (1^{14}), but simply that the Divine is greater than any expression of it there can be in flesh and blood. The writer of this Gospel was early distinguished with the title " theologian." Every student of the Gospel knows how well he deserved the title. Yet the Evangelist does not involve his readers in any abstruse thinking on such a subject as the relations of the Persons in the Godhead. In this chapter the main stress is not laid on the absolute greatness of God the Father. *That* could be taken for granted. The emphasis is not on " Believe in *God*," but on " Believe also in *Me*."

For, practically, it may be assumed that men

wish to get to God and to rest in Him. But it can *not* be assumed, the Church in her mission *dare* not assume, that men know and are taking the right way to God. That could not be assumed even of the more spiritual type of Jews of the Synagogue—men, *e.g.*, like Nicodemus, who had a certain appreciation of the person and teaching of Jesus. Indeed, in John's day, in view of attacks from without and hesitations within the Church, explicit teaching on this subject was needed for the guidance of the responsible shepherds of the sheep and lambs of Christ.

That is why in the representation of this Gospel this matter of the continued activity of Jesus in the unseen world and of His being the only *Way* to the Father, as also the *Truth* and the *Life*, is as it were hammered out in question and answer between Jesus Himself and the chosen disciples. The instructors are being themselves instructed: "We know not whither Thou goest." "How can we know the way?" "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." "How wilt Thou manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?" Thus are expressed the ever-recurring hesitations even of believing men who should be guides to others in the faith.

The answer to all these questions is one word. The answer is *Jesus*. Jesus as He is in the experience of believers. Yet it will repay us to take the

questions and the answers one by one. Thus, *Where was Jesus going?* Not into the darkness of men's hate and cruelty, and not into separation from His own. That was only a stage of the journey, not its goal. He was going to the light and space of His Father's presence. He was going to prepare a place for them and would come again to take them to Himself.

But why should He require to *go away* in order to *come to the Father?* Who *was* the Father? Might He not be *once for all shown* to the ending of all doubt? In answer: He had to go, because He was not simply the Teacher of all He had learnt from the Father ("the Truth"), and the Possessor and Bestower of the Father's goods ("the Life"), but also the *Way* to the Father. Unless, therefore, He WENT, as He was going, there was no *way* to the Father either for them or for any man. As for *showing* the Father, could it be that they had heard His words and seen His works and yet did not know that *He* was in the Father and the Father in *Him*, and that there was nothing more to be shown of the Father than *He* had shown?

It is thus that in this unique Gospel a veil of love and glory is drawn over the tragedy of the Cross. None the less the testimony of this Gospel is one with that of the other witnesses of the New Testament in holding forth the sufferings and death of Jesus, the things that were to the Jew an

"offence," and to the Gentile, "foolishness," as the indispensable means of redemption for men. The faith that sees no peculiar and immeasurable worth in them—whatever it is—is not the faith of the New Testament or of the Christian Church.

We must not close without a word on the question of Judas (not Iscariot): "How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?" We have just been occupied with the matter of going to the Father. But there is also that of *staying* with Him, or, in other words, abiding in the communion of the Father through the Son, who is the Way to Him. The answer to Judas' question is simple and practical, yet also characteristic of our profound Gospel. Clearly there is a distinction between the *manifestation* and the abiding presence of Jesus. The manifestation is something more than the presence. Yet it is not anything greater—rather something less. The manifestation is occasional, like the miracles or "signs" of Jesus; but the presence is constant. The manifestation is the "sign" of the Presence. As the manifestation is "not to the world," it cannot be anything to which men in general attach importance, or which they even see. It may be something, so far as the world is concerned, unnoticed and unknown—hidden as a new thought in a great thinker's brain, mysterious and momentous as the birth of a soul that will reform the

world and reshape the history of man. Something inward and spiritual, confined, it may be, even in its outward aspects, to the men or groups to whom it is made. They can think of it as nothing less than a coming to them of the Father and the Son, and a coming with intent to stay. The important matter is not how to describe the manifestation, but how to *experience* it, so as to *keep* it, if not by actual renewal at least, in substance. In other words: How are we to be in communion with God through Jesus Christ, not in the future merely or now and then fitfully, but here and now and constantly? John has been described not untruly as a "mystic" and a "theologian." Yet, however profound may be its meaning, his speech is always simple. Here he is simple and clear as His Master, when in that Master's name he lays down the condition of that manifestation of the Lord to His own, whose issue is an abiding communion with the Father and with the Son. The condition is simple, practical, and for everyone. It is the condition that we love and obey, and obey so as to love the more. The secret of all that God will do through His Son—whether for the Church or the world—lies with the soul that hears and obeys the words of Jesus. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."

Notes

1. *Historical Kernel in the Johannine Chapters of Farewell.*—There *was* a last Supper, which Jesus "desired with desire" to have and *did* have with His disciples. At the Supper He indicated the presence of a traitor, and on the same occasion spoke of Himself as One going in the way of death, whom yet His disciples should see again. See the synoptic accounts, especially Luke, with whom we find the fullest direct reminiscences of table-talk. True, we cannot think of John 14 (or 13)–17 as *verbatim* reports. But they illustrate the doctrine they expound regarding the spirit of truth, which is a spirit of *remembrance*. Modern criticism does not belie, it rather alone adequately confirms, the universal conviction of Christians that nowhere in the New Testament or in all literature are we closer to reality and to Jesus Himself than in these chapters. (See, especially Luke 22^{14-38}, Mark 14^{27}, Matt. $26^{31\,ff.}$, John 14^{26}, $15^{12\,ff.}$).

2. *Presence and Coming Again of Christ.*—The real need of the Church, expressed from its earliest days in the word *Parousia*, has been, what that word signifies, the *presence* of Christ. But at first this need was partially obscured through the liveliness of the expectation of our Lord's immediate return and manifestation in glory. In the New Testament itself we can discern both the waxing and the waning of this expectation. More than this, we can discern the perplexity which disappointment caused, and can listen to Christian teachers (*e.g.* St Paul in 2 Thess. and the writer of 2 Peter) solving for their hearers the problem of that perplexity. The furthest point in the solution of this problem—and that a point at which we are resting at this hour—

is reached in the Johannine Gospel. It is hardly too much to say that the sole aim of the Gospel is to solve just this problem. We may certainly say that a *main* feature of the Gospel is its effort to bring the figure of the Son of Man, the Saviour of His people and the Judge of all the earth, out of the future into the present, and to change what is outward, future, and imaginary into what is spiritual, present, and real. We believe we are pointing only to another illustration of the same kind of effort when we say that, without serious distortion of the historical features of our Lord, or, at least, without any such distortion as cannot easily be put right through attention to the synoptic Gospels, this Gospel enables us to hear the voice of Jesus speaking on many problems of its author's own day, which are also in varying degrees problems of ours.

CHAPTER XX

SERVANTS AND FRIENDS

JOHN 15 and 16 (parts)

JAMES and John were without doubt ignorant and inconsiderate when they asked for the places to the right and left of Jesus in His kingdom. Yet, while we read that the other ten were indignant, we do not read that Jesus was so. *His* attitude is rather that of acknowledging in the ambition of the two brothers a suggestion of what ought to be the aim of all His disciples—that, viz. of being in the position in which they will best learn the secret of their Master's intimacy with God. Let it be generously, yet not falsely, assumed that we are all eager disciples, and that our ambition goes out in the direction of service. We wish to accomplish something that shall have value, not simply in the sight of men, but in the sight of Jesus and His Father. In our lives we would somehow touch and enlarge the life of God Himself. Our Lord meets this ambition with approval. Not only is He willing to call us *friends*, but he encourages us to believe that there is a "glory" of the Father, to which

we can contribute—something that would not be even for God Himself without us (15[8]). Nevertheless, He tells us plainly that we cannot so contribute to God without dependence upon Himself.

Apart from the teaching concerning the Comforter, these chapters have two subjects, which may be defined as *service* and *persecution*. We are speaking just now of the former, and we are remembering that service, in the sense of Jesus, is both the fruit and the condition of friendship. How is the condition to be fulfilled ? Only through such a close, constant, and vital dependence upon Himself as is figured to us in the emblem of the vine and its branches. Apart from Him we are withered branches, fit for burning. Our *first* need or duty is to be engrafted on Him ; our *constant* need or duty is to live on in Him, that He also may live on in us. For without Him we can do nothing.

Besides dependence, our Lord deals here with yet another matter which we have anticipated. He is more concerned than even we are to get rid of what is obnoxious in the word *servant*, especially in the old-world sense of *slave*. We cannot add to our own glory or the glory of God except as we are free. But who is the free man ? The free man is he who is so free from himself that he can, if need be, do slavish things and yet not be enslaved. He can wash the feet of his brother and yet be only the more his brother or his superior. Our Lord desires

with all His heart not merely that we should be of those whom His great salvation shall in the end reach, but that we should be His intimate friends, fit to be entrusted with the secret of His own unique communion with God. But the servant of Christ must stoop, with the Master, to the servant's lowliest task. There is no other way to greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven than what He has commended by His word and example. To abide in His love we must keep His commandments even as He kept His Father's trust, and abode in His love.

The *other* special subject of these chapters is *persecution*. A good while before our Gospel was written the Jewish persecution of the Christian Church had come to emphatic expression. Of the great article of the One Unseen God the Synagogue and the Church were in all the world the *chief*, practically the *only*, witnesses. In point of numbers they were possibly about equal—both were everywhere throughout the Empire—but, in point of priority and political prestige, the Jew had the advantage. Since the time of Julius Cæsar, *i.e.* for about a century and a half, he had been on terms with the "powers that be." His religion was tolerated and even held in outward respect. The position of Christians was more precarious, yet the progress of the Christian mission was ominous for the Jew. The Church was being recruited largely from the Synagogue. This led

to an antagonism in the Jew which amazed and distressed the Church. Not only were Jews who became Christians excommunicated from the Synagogue, but whatever political influence the latter possessed was used to discredit the Christians with the imperial authorities. Worst of all, all this odious energy was shown in the name of the One True God. The Jewish authorities believed that in giving up the Christians, even to the punishment of death, they were doing God service (16^{2}). It is part of the main purpose of these chapters to comfort, not simply any surviving members of the original circle round Jesus, but rather the whole Church at the end of the first century regarding the distressing situation. Let us note briefly three main items in this comfort.

First: Christians should not forget that the Master had forewarned them of just such persecutions. There is, *e.g.*, what we read in Matthew 10. What is new in John's account is the ascription of such warnings to the time of farewell (read 16^{1-4}). Clearly, the Christians in the Evangelist's time tended to complain that the persecutions had come upon them without warning from the Lord. The Evangelist points out that that was not the case. Jesus *had* spoken explicitly at the last. And the Spirit and the time brought His words home.

Second: Beyond the mere words of the Lord was His example. Christians must be content to

be in the world as their Master was. How did the world treat *Him?* How did "His own" people (1^{11}) treat Him? It did not recognise Him. It hated Him without a cause. It saw works such as none other did, yet it did not believe. Here was sin without any cover of excuse. Men had seen and hated both Him and His Father. Yet He had endured it all to the laying down of His life that He might finish the task received from the Father. There was nothing in their case that made it worse than His. They should suffer persecution gladly be cause it made their case more recognisably like His.

Third: There was one other thing—the greatest of all.

He had suffered all this. The world had done its worst on Him. Yet *He* was the Conqueror, not the world. For a moment He seemed to be eclipsed. His followers mourned and the world rejoiced. But He rose from the dead. He was with them and in them for ever. They knew it, and should know it more and more. Because *He* lived, *they* should live also.

It is a rich comfort. We speak, nay, sing of it, still. We do well to set it forth yet again in language. For we cannot speak of it too plainly or too strongly:—

A. The faithful *words* of Jesus, always true under the test of experience.

B. The monumental *example* of Jesus bearing patiently the whole weight of the world's sin.

C. The glorious *victory* of Jesus, past and lasting for Him, present and to come for us. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Notes

1. *Vine and Vineyard.*—For the figure see in the Old Testament, Jer. 2^{21}, Ps. $80^{14\,f.}$, and in the New, Matt. $20^{1\,ff.}$, $21^{33\,ff.}$, Mark $12^{1\,ff.}$. Two points are noticeable in the Johannine use of the figure. *First*, not the vineyard but the Vine, not Israel but the Son of God is prominent. *Second*, just for this reason the Vine is distinguished by the epithet *true* or *real* (*alethinos*). For Jesus is the real Vine of whom the corporate personality of Israel was only the foreshadowing type. The thought seems to be that the Son of God was prophetically typified in the calling and history of Israel, the "son" (Hos. 11^{1}, Matt. 2^{16}) and the "servant" (Isa. $42^{1\,ff.}$, $43^{10\,ff.}$, etc.) of Jehovah. Jesus was the real *Son* and *Servant*, the real Plant of the Lord in whom is all the glory of the Father of all. Possibly there is also the thought that the true disciples are branches of Jesus just as He Himself is the Branch of Jehovah mentioned in prophecy (Zech. 3^{8}, 6^{12}, Isa. 11^{1}, Jer. 3^{5}).

2. "*I call you Servants no longer*" (15^{15} Moffatt).—The "no *longer*" should be noted. He *had* called them so hitherto, and this wholly proper designation of their status does not fall away easily from His lips (verse 20). Neither Peter nor Paul nor any apostle ever presumed to introduce himself to any section of the Church as the "friend" of Jesus Christ. Is it credible that one who has so successfully kept himself in the background

as John could have spoken of himself in anything like this way? On the other hand, it is very credible that his early ambition to have the first place in nearness to Jesus was remembered by his followers, who gladly believed that he had after all the first place in the love of Jesus, and so came habitually to speak of him as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." Stanton (*op. cit.*) works out very suggestively the idea that, even in the days when he literally walked with Jesus, John may have had a young companion, of the same name, who also followed Jesus though too young to be of the Twelve, and who saw Him largely through the Apostle's eyes. He followed the latter to Ephesus and was afterwards known as John the Presbyter. He was the leading member of the Johannine School, originated the habit of speaking of him as the "disciple whom Jesus loved," and had a chief hand in editing his writings. We are here, no doubt, in the region of the imagination. Yet both John the Apostle and John the Presbyter were real persons, and since at least the end of the second century they have been inseparably associated in the mind of the Church. Stanton's suggestions are at least relevant to the facts, and help us to put them into a credible whole. For a wholly different, not unsuggestive, yet, we think, far less reliable exercise of the historical imagination, see Bacon's *The Fourth Gospel in Historical Research and Debate*. Bacon works out the theory that, while the editors of our Gospel believed that the "Disciple" was John, the author himself intended a cryptic, yet, for the discerning, obvious, designation of the Apostle Paul. Bacon supports his theory largely on Gal. 2^{20}, "The Son of God *who loved me*."

CHAPTER XXI

"THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT"

JOHN $14^{15-18, 26 f.}$, $15^{26 f.}$, 16^{7-11}

WHEN we say "The Communion" or "Holy Communion," we think of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. So, likely enough, if not so inevitably, did John. He valued the Christian sacraments, yet, as we have seen, he does not even mention the institution of the Lord's Supper. The reason of this abstinence is his desire to concentrate attention on the spiritual reality covered by the Sacrament. How do we really maintain communion with God through Jesus Christ? If we were to answer, "By faith," John would, of course, agree, but he would immediately remind us that "believing" is an active process, and that the activity has two special forms, viz. prayer and obedience. On just these means of communion with Himself and His Father in the unseen world, Jesus laid stress in bidding farewell to the disciples. If only they knew it, what wealth of supply for every conceivable need they had in His presence with the Father, even though it meant His absence

from their sight! For that presence was in their interest. *Hitherto*, He had been their Companion. The benefit they had got from Him was comparatively unconscious and accidental. They had not thought of the *total* benefit, which was Himself. *Now*, they were to come to the Father for themselves with that unmeasured total—His *name* and all it stood for—in their minds and hearts and on their lips. Now and ever afterwards they were to ask and receive in His name that His joy might remain in them and that their joy might be full.

But prayer cannot stand alone any more than faith. The benefits obtainable through the name of Jesus are boundless. Yet the condition of obtaining "more" from that boundless store is that we use to the best of our ability what we already have. And what we already have are particularly the *words* of Jesus. In a degree that cannot be measured, Jesus imparts Himself to His own—the Church and the individual believer—through His words. "I have given unto them the words that Thou gavest Me," He says to His Father (17^{8}). The words are not dead things. They are spirit and they are life (6^{63}). And they are not simply to be received and remembered. They are to be "kept"—that is, particularly, they are to be *done*. There is no way to the endless benefit covered by the name of Jesus that turns aside from the words of Jesus: "If a man love

Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him" (14[23]). If Christianity, and the world through Christianity, are being delivered from superstition and stationariness, the deliverance may be measured by the degree of fidelity to this condition of communion with the Divine. This fidelity has kept our religion sane, and made Christianity an historical progressive faith. No words so monumental and eternal as the words of Jesus, yet none also so living and so plastic!

Beyond these practical conditions of communion lies a matter which may seem more weighty, and is, certainly in an intellectual sense, more difficult, viz. the divine *Agency* of the communion. Our Evangelist has often been credited with a chief part in the formulation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and of the Trinity. And there are, in truth, few portions of his Gospel that have stirred the thought and feeling of his readers more deeply than those relating to the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, that occur at intervals in those three chapters (14–16). Yet John must have experienced a difficulty in regard to the doctrine of the Spirit that was not present, at least in the same degree, to the mind of the early believers, or even of Paul. The first Christians expected a visible return of Jesus. It was to happen within their own generation. This expectation implied that the presence of the

unseen Jesus with His Church here and now, however real it might be, was an imperfect presence. There was something yet to come, different not only in degree but in kind. There was, therefore, room for a doctrine of the Spirit as an Agency or Power able to *represent* Jesus, yet not all that Jesus would be when He came in Person. The Spirit was not the full inheritance of the sons of God, but, as Paul put it, the earnest or pledge of that inheritance (Eph. 1^{14}, Rom. 8^{23}). Now, John's point of view in this matter was scarcely that of the early believers. He does not reject the idea of the visible return of the Lord Jesus. Possibly, he regards it as occupying a place in the imagination of the Church from which it would not be easy, or even right, to dislodge it. But his retention of the idea is rather formal than real. The truth on which he lays stress is not that the Lord will come, but that He has come already not only to His disciples but, in a sense, also to the world. He has come through death and resurrection and come to stay—an *inward*, but just therefore more effective, presence, the power of a life hid with Himself in God. The manifestation of the Son of God in flesh and blood was real and it was necessary, yet that part of the revelation of the Divine that is *seen* is not the greatest but the least part, and the most blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed (20^{29}).

It follows that John has no real place in the needs of his faith or in his thinking for a Comforter or Advocate who is distinct from the Risen and Living Jesus Himself. It was useful and perhaps necessary for him to express his thought in the current Christian language of his day, which spoke of a distinctive Spirit, but it is also useful for us to disentangle his thought from that inadequate vehicle, and to lay the emphasis where we clearly see that the Evangelist himself laid it. If we do this, we seem to find that, while there may be a certain intellectual inadequacy in the Johannine doctrine of the Spirit, there are yet three things which we may accept from it and take to our hearts. Two relate to the Church, and have an important bearing on its spiritual strength and its sanity.

The *first* is the *vision* of Christ, the vision ever recurring. At heart, the first believers were not wrong in desiring to "see" the Lord. We need the vision, the miraculous vision of Jesus; not a vision that the world can see, but one that *we* can see and that we need. We cannot force the vision, but it is His promise. We must yearn for it; we must pray for it; we must work for it and we must expect it. "I will not leave you orphans," He says. "I will come to you."

Second, there is the *teaching* of Christ. There must always be new teaching in the Church. If Jesus was the total word of God, distributing to

His Church the words which the Father had given to Himself, surely there were many things which He could not say to His immediate followers. They could not bear them yet (16^{12}). But when He came to them and their successors as the Spirit of Truth, He would lead them in some sense beyond His actually spoken words. That did not mean that He would lead them beyond Himself. He could not show them any other things than just His own. Nor did it mean that His actually spoken words would become less important or less necessary. Progress through the Spirit of Truth does not take us away from or beyond the words of Jesus. It takes us to deeper apprehension of them and to wider applications. "He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you" (14^{26}). This is what makes progress in the Church in doctrine and the corresponding practice both safe and sane.

The *Third* thing touches the world. For the coming of Christ, in the sense of His presence as the Spirit of Truth, means something decisive for the world. While the tenderness of Jesus is flowing out in those chapters to His own who are chosen out of the world, one wonders what is to become of the world itself, for whom He declines even to pray (17^{9}). There are, we perhaps feel, no writings in the world that say richer things about the love of God, His love even to the world, than the Gospel

and the First Epistle of John. But, reading of sin and righteousness and judgment, we seem to hear only the note of sternness. The reason is that the manifestation of the Son of God is regarded as complete. The full light shines and the world must make its choice. It must either come to the light or remain in its own darkness. There may be a just hesitation in saying what the world, hitherto unbelieving, will do, of its own will, in the future. But there is no doubt that Jesus, as the Spirit of Truth, will prevail even in the world. If it is sin not to believe in the Only-begotten of the Father, the world will know its sin. If it is supremely righteous to have been in the world as Jesus was, the world will acknowledge that righteousness. If the living, dying, and coming again of Jesus mean the weighing and the judging of the power that has ruled the world and kept it in darkness, the world will see that judgment and know that it is final.

The words are stern, but they are not hopeless. Jesus will prevail, let who will believe or not believe. Blessed are they who turn to Him that they may believe and live.

Notes

1. *The Paraclete* (*Paraklētos*). — The Greek word means one *called* in to help, *i.e.* an advocate. The verb *parakalein*, however, often means to *exhort* or *comfort*

(cp. Rom. 12^1, Acts 4^{36}). Hence the rendering *Comforter* of the A.V. In 1 John 2^1 the word is used of Jesus. It is shown above that such a usage is entirely in harmony with John's theology, in which the Paraclete is indistinguishable from the unseen Jesus. It is surely unreasonable to infer from this usage that the writer of the Epistle cannot be also the writer of the Gospel.

2. *Greek and Hebrew Conceptions of "Life."*—Besides the practical means and the Divine agency of communion, treated above, there is its *matter*. What is it that we share with God? The answer of our Gospel is expressed in the word *life*. In Greek philosophy the Divine life is *sui generis*, a "thinking upon thought," as Aristotle said. It is apart from all material conditions, and it is difficult to see how even the philosopher, let alone the common man, could share in it. To solve the difficulty we have the mediating conception of the *Logos* or Reason. The Hebrew conception of life was more concrete and practical. Life was thought, but it was also action and feeling. It was spirit, but it was also soul and body. The lower must be subordinated to the higher but not lost in it. Christianity is the persistent endeavour, practical and speculative, to unite or harmonise these two conceptions of life. It may perhaps be said that the most fundamental and far-reaching example of this endeavour is offered by our Evangelist. John takes something from each side of the contradiction. From the Greek side he takes the conception of Divine life, that is of its own kind having nothing in common with flesh and blood. But he also takes, and in taking profoundly modifies (the modification comes, we may say, from the Hebrew side),

the conception of the mediating *Logos*, whom he identifies with the historical Person, Jesus of Nazareth. Hence he is free to say that the life is not simply the exclusive Life of God. It is also the "Light of *men*." There is that in it in which the varied energies of men may find fulfilment. Men may seek their own and find it in Jesus, and if Jesus as the Son of God was not only from eternity with God but also Divine (John 1^2, Moffatt's translation), it followed that death had no more power over Him than over God, the Father Himself. Death removed His visible presence from those who trusted Him, but, so far from lessening, it increased His real nearness to them and His power of touching their lives to all the issues of the sons of God. If He were *going* to the Father, He *came* just therefore all the more to those who were the Father's in Him.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

JOHN 17, especially verse 9 f.

JOHN never uses either the word *Sacrament* or the word *Church*. Yet there is more that is in a good sense Churchly and Sacramental in his Gospel than anywhere else in the New Testament. Another peculiarity is that Jesus in this Gospel never prays out of His own need. He prays audibly for the sake of the multitude, or, as here, for the sake of the disciples, as those who have been "given" to Him "out of the world." We may say reverently of the "prayer" of this chapter, what is true more or less of all public prayer, that it is discourse as much as prayer. And the subject of *this* discourse is the Church. For the disciples *are* the Church. They are the *promise* of it. And we are concerned here with the Evangelist, not with the mere promise, but with the actual historical phenomenon of the Church as a recognisable growing power among men. *First:* When did the Christian Church in this sense begin? It began not with the appearance, but with the disappearance of Jesus, with what the

world called His death, which was in reality His return to glory with His Father. The point is put here with characteristic vividness. Three times since we entered on the last Act of the holy drama a bell has sounded and a curtain has been raised to give a momentary vision of things unspeakable: When Greeks would see Jesus, when the traitor rose from the presence of Jesus and His friends to go out into the night, and now when Jesus is going with the Eleven to the Garden and to His death, we hear the words, "The hour is come." And the "hour" is the hour of the glory of the Son of Man.

There is, in substance, nothing new in this. We have it implicitly in the other Gospels, when they tell of the Resurrection of Jesus. We have it in the record of the Power that came on the praying fellowship on the day of Pentecost, and has worked on past John's day and through the centuries to our own. What is new is the explicit statement from the lips of Jesus, still in the flesh, revealing a light triumphing over the world's hatred and cruelty at the very moment when that darkness had gathered to its thickest around Him. At *this* moment, He speaks of a finished work, of a "power over all flesh," and of a glory He had with the Father before the world was. The pledge of the glory is the fellowship of friends He is leaving in the world. Not the Resurrection and not Pentecost,

but already *this* moment of the light of His own faith shining triumphantly through the thickest darkness is the historic moment of the birth of the Church. Let the Church remember that birthday and take courage. Her beginning was not a visibly triumphant Lord, but a dying Lord, who laid down His life of Himself.

Second: How is the Church to be preserved—*in* the world but not *of* it? The answer is connected closely with the expressions, *name*, *word* or *words*, *truth* of God the Father, all which, as used with the words *keep* or *sanctify*, mean in substance the same thing. Jesus had discharged a trust from His Father to manifest His character, will, and love to men, who were His Father's gift to Him, and His own choice from the world. Now he passes on the trust to these men who are still in the world. He acknowledges their fidelity, but He knows their weakness and He prays for them. It is the same trust yet, with a difference both in substance and scope which is all-important. On the *one* hand, the trust comes to them bearing a glory of fulfilment infinitely outshining all that with the best will they could hope to achieve. They should fail in this or that, but His fulfilment remained and was theirs. In life and death He had set Himself apart for God for their sakes (verse 19), and for the truth's sake in Him they also should be set apart. Only let them be loyal to Him in

their ideal and in their dependence. On the *other* hand, the trust as it came to them was different in scope. They were to do *greater* works than He did —working not among the Jews only but in all the world—because He was going to the Father. Thus the "finished" work (19^{30}) is unfinished still. The *Church* has the great task of finishing it. Her equipment is the Spirit and words of Jesus. The prayer assumes that the equipment is sufficient. Only, there is need to pray that the Church may use it. Jesus prayed that the Church might be kept apart from the world, yet distinguished in it through fidelity to His own words, which He had received from the Father and given to them.

The *Third* matter is the *unity* of the Church. Even in the Apostle Paul's time there were threats of division in the Church (1 Cor. 1^{10}, and, generally, the two Corinthian Epistles), but in the time of our Evangelist differences in both doctrine and practice had become acute almost to the point of scandal before the world. There was actual secession. "They went out from us" because "they were not of us" (1 John 2^{19}), is at once the complaint and the defence of the maimed Church. The differences touched doctrine, *e.g.*, that concerning the reality of the Son of God in the flesh (1 John 4^{2}). They also touched practice, not to speak of the grave errors in conduct that may be implied in the references of 1 John 1^{6-10}: there were the

ritualists who laid a false emphasis on the Sacraments; and there were, on the other hand, the individualists, who, on the ground that the Spirit was everything, said that the water and the bread and the wine, and, in general, the outward order of the Church were nothing. The more acute these differences became the more the unity of the Church and the success of its mission in the world were threatened. All through the Gospel of John and that closely kindred writing, the First Epistle of John, we can trace a firm and loving effort to mediate between these oppositions. "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth," *yet*, the Sacraments have their place too, for the new life is "born of *water* and the Spirit" (John $3^{8, 5}$). And, again, there are "three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5^{8}). There are no references to the *details* of controversy, or to any attempted solution of the difficulties. But all the more impressive is the emphasis laid on the danger of disunion and sect-making in the Church. All the more impressive, too, is the stress laid, not on any skill in the intellectual formulation of the truth, but simply on the spirit of love within the Church. It was of this the Lord Jesus thought, and for this He prayed, when He was leaving the world and going to the Father. If only His chosen and their successors would love one another as He had loved them, the

world would know that He had come from the Father. So, after the Master, taught the beloved disciple. He knew that God was Love (1 John 4^{8}); and in that love, which is God, is the only solvent both for the acids of controversy in the Church and the hardness of unbelief in the world.

There is yet a *Fourth* matter, viz., the *glorification* of the Church. The great prayer ends, as it began, with the prospect of the glory of the Son of God, and the end is linked closely with the vision of the unity of the Church. The Lord Jesus expresses His will that the men whom His Father has given Him should be with Him where He is, that they may behold His glory (verse 24). This "glory" proceeds from the love of the Father to the Son, but it is reached through the Son's performance of His trust from the Father in reference to men. That performance touches immediately, not the *whole* world, but the men, who have been chosen out of the world, viz. the Church. As the Father sent the Son into the world, so the Son sends the Church. The Church's mission is, indeed, not fulfilled until the world believes. But the stress is laid, not on the ultimate victory of the Church, but on the means by which that victory will be secured. The means is the love of God—the love of the Father to the Son—as the growing possession of the Church. In that possession, and all that it means both for itself and the world, the Church is glorified. And

it *is* a *growing* possession. The Church advances in power as it advances in the knowledge, which is also the *love* of God. And the Lord Jesus, abiding in the glory of the Father, takes care that the Church shall so advance—even to the measure of that glory: "I have declared Thy name and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (verse 26).

Note.

The Private and Public Prayers of Jesus.—It is entirely probable that besides the customary thanksgivings of the Passover-meal, Jesus uttered at *this* Passover audible prayers of some length, and perhaps we may regard chapter 17 as a striking instance of what Dr Abbott calls Johannine *intervention*, the object of which in this case is to illustrate a habit of Jesus in regard to public religious acts which the Evangelist considered was not made sufficiently prominent in the synoptic record. While this may be true, it is not less true to say that the Johannine style in this reference obscures the *personal* aspect of the prayers of Jesus. The most frequent references to the prayers of Jesus occur in Luke. Exclusive of $24^{30,\ 50\ f.}$ (post-Resurrection), there are eleven instances: 3^{21}, 6^{12}, $9^{18,\ 28\ f.}$, 10^{21}, $11^{1\ ff.}$, $22^{19,\ 32,\ 41\ ff.}$, $23^{34,\ 46}$. Except 10^{21}, 22^{19}, and $11^{1\ ff.}$ (a doubtful case), none of them can fairly be regarded as instances of public prayer. *All* of them are suggestive of needs (whether to supplicate or to give thanks) which He shares with others, and *eight* of them, not excluding 22^{32} (intercession for Peter), suggest needs personal to Himself with reference to His mission.

CHAPTER XXIII

"BEHOLD THE MAN!"

JOHN 18 and 19 (parts)

THE text of John, as it has come down to us, leaves it doubtful [1] whether the Jewish part of the trial of Jesus took place before Annas or before Caiaphas. But there is no doubt as to the Evangelist's intention to pass over the Jewish trial, as a proceeding of no judicial worth, and lay the whole stress on the trial before Pilate. Three motives, in particular, guided him in this intention.

First, he wished to express the consciousness of Jesus that His mission concerned the whole world. Jesus does not repudiate the charge of being "King of the Jews," though Pilate's use of the phrase had no worth if it came simply from the suggestion of others. He was far more than King of the Jews. He was King of Truth—supreme in that world of reality whose every son heard His voice.

Second, he would bring out that from the Roman trial, if it could be so called—from this testing of the truth as it is in Jesus in the conversations

[1] See *Notes* at the end of this chapter.

between Him and Pilate—the Jews were through their own scruples excluded (18[48]). Thus the Roman trial of Jesus, or, in other words, the only trial in which, in any degree, the forms of order and justice were observed, was an event of which the "Jews" could say nothing. They did not know what had passed between Jesus and Pilate. But John knew, and the entire history of the relations between the worldly power and the Christian Church since the death of Jesus down, past John's day, to our own proves that he knew well. Jesus is judged even in this world, not indeed perfectly, but, so far as the judgment goes, *truly*, when He is allowed to speak for Himself, and when the witnesses of envy and hate are absent.

And, *Third*, the Evangelist would show that if, in a trial of Jesus and His Church before a Roman court, justice failed—as it did fail both in his own time and in that of the Master—the reason did not lie in any prejudice native to the Roman judges, however much it might lie in their weakness. It lay in the obstinacy and cunning with which Jewish hatred of Jesus and His followers set itself to deflect the course of justice. Apart from his fear of the consequences of refusal, Pilate would never have surrendered Jesus to His Jewish enemies. And we may, perhaps, assume that, apart from the machinations of the Jews, there would have been in John's own day no imperial persecution of the Christians.

And there is yet one *more* point. This Gospel does not, any more than the earlier records, screen the guilt of Pilate. But it declares expressly the lesser degree of that guilt compared with that of the Jewish betrayers of Jesus, and it lays peculiar stress on the anxiety of Pilate to save at least the life of Jesus (19^{1-16}, especially verse 11). The declaration of the lesser guilt of Pilate is given not as the mere opinion of the Evangelist, but as the utterance of the Lord Himself. Jesus admits that Pilate's power over life and death is a trust from God. Pilate is, of course, guilty, if for any reason he abuses his trust by a decision of injustice. But stress is laid on the greater guilt of those who tempt Pilate to such injustice against his own inclination and conviction: "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin" (19^{11}). Whether actually spoken by Jesus or not, these words express accurately the moral situation not only as between the imperial authorities and those who instigated them to persecution of the Church in its early days, but also, on the whole, as between the temporal power and the active enemies of the Church in every age. History justifies the assertion that those who bear the responsibility of supreme judicial power are rarely the active enemies of the Church. They may be indifferent to it, or even contemptuous, but they are, as a rule, unwilling to interfere with it, even when they think its action

misguided, or, in the civil sense, wrong. They may not be spiritually minded, but they see clearly that the aims and methods of the Church—in particular its repudiation of force—involve no conflict with rights of which they are the guardians. They may be drawn into action against the Church, and they may do injustice, as, *e.g.*, in the Scottish Church Crisis of 1904—injustice for which they are responsible. Yet it remains true that those who persuaded or frightened the authorities into such action are, before God, guiltier than they.

This point is impressed in our Gospel in what may strike us as an even more emphatic way than that of quoting words from the lips of Jesus. The most moving scene in John's account of the Trial of Jesus is that in which, after being scourged, He is shown to His accusers wearing a mock imperial robe and a crown of thorns, and Pilate says, "Behold the Man" (19[6]). The suggestion of the narrative is that Pilate permitted the scourging and the mockery of Jesus in order to appeal to the pity of His accusers. Surely the King whom they rejected was dishonoured to the measure of their contempt. Surely they would relent at the sight of the sufferings of One who, however hated by them, was after all a *man*, and, as they well knew, innocent. Whether strictly historical or not, the scene is finely conceived and is true to the spiritual situation as between Pilate and the Jews in relation to Jesus.

It shows the best in Pilate and the worst in the accusers of Jesus, who were murderers in the very fact that they were accusers of *Him*. As we gaze on the spectacle, so horrible, yet (because the Lord is there) so holy, we are conscious, perhaps, of a certain pity for Pilate. He seems to do his best for Jesus, yet no best will suffice apart from homage to righteousness in the Person of his Prisoner. Pilate knows that Jesus deserves neither scourging nor mockery, much less death. He permits the lesser injury that he may avoid doing the greater. But the demon who is served with hearts of hate and deeds of cruelty will not accept half-service any more than He whose glory is in love and goodness. If Pilate scourges, he must also kill. If he does wrong one moment to please the Jews, he must do greater wrong the next to please them yet more.

Pilate pitied Jesus; the Jews hated Him. But pity alone cannot conquer hate. There is no match for hatred of Jesus but the love of Him. And the love was not there. For this was the hour of His enemies and the power of darkness.

Notes

1. *Displacement of Text at* $18^{1\,ff.}$.—The sequences of the narrative at this point are clumsy owing to the interjection and division of the record of Peter's denials. Mere clumsiness of this kind may be both possible and pardonable in a writer like John. Yet it is impossible to suppose that even he placed verse 24 where we find

it. The least emendation we can make is to place it between verses 14 and 15. Then we have a sequence that is at least intelligible. Jesus is taken to the house of Annas, who sends Him bound to Caiaphas, who conducts the examination. It is just possible, though hardly probable, that the editors intentionally left the text in the confusion that had crept into it. If so, their reason would be the perception that a confusion in the text, which made it impossible to decide whether Annas or Caiaphas were the questioner, or whether, if the former were the questioner, there could be said to have been any Jewish trial of Jesus at all, tended to heighten the impression of the offence to common sense as well as law and justice in all the Jewish procedure against Jesus which John wished to produce.

2. *Principal Points peculiar to John in the Story of the Arrest and Trial of Jesus.*—We offer little more than an enumeration. The presence of a *speira* or cohort of Roman soldiers at the arrest of Jesus; Jesus takes the initiative, interrogating the soldiers; they fall back and drop to the ground when He announces Himself; Jesus asks that His disciples may go free; the servant whom Peter struck was called Malchus; the reason why Peter should put up his sword is that Jesus must drink the cup His Father had given Him; Jesus is taken "to Annas first"; He is struck by an officer for His too truthful answer; interview of Jesus with Pilate, from which the Jews are self-excluded; Jesus declares Himself King of Truth; Pilate exhibits Him after scourging, and wearing a crown of thorns, and says to his accusers, "Behold the Man." Of the omissions of John, the most notable are: the agony and prayer of Jesus in the garden; the betrayal by

a kiss from Judas; the flight of the disciples; the confession of Jesus before the High Priest that He is the Son of Man who will come in the clouds (Dan. 7^{13}).

3. *The Roman Speira in the Garden.—Speira* is the Greek equivalent for the Roman *cohors* or cohort. A cohort was the tenth part of a legion and might consist of any number of soldiers from 500 up to 1000. Hence the commander of a *speira* is usually described as *chiliarchos*=a commander of 1000. In the synoptic account the *speira* does not appear till after the trial. Thus at Matt. 27^{27}: "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the prætorium and got all the *regiment* (*speira*) round Him" (Moffatt). An equally noticeable point is that all the Synoptists describe the commander of the *speira* as a "commander of a *hundred.*" Matthew and Luke use the Greek word *hekatontarchos* (Matt. 27^{54}, Luke 23^{47}) while Mark uses the Latin *kenturiōn* (15^{39}). John, on the other hand, wishing after his manner to enhance the impression he desires his readers to have of the irrepressible self-command of Jesus, which is also a command of the world, represented by the Roman soldiers, gives the commander of the *speira* the name to which the highest possible number of its soldiers entitles him. He is *chiliarchos*, commander of a 1000 (18^{12}). Similarly, in John's representation, the whole *speira* accompany Judas to the Garden (18^{3}), and they all retire and drop to the ground when Jesus said, "I am He" (18^{6}). While, as will appear below, we think the signs of John's possessing information regarding some details of the Passion which was not accessible to the Synoptists are too clear to be ignored, we also think that the most reverent readers of the Johannine narrative will do well to take the particulars, just noted ($18^{3, 6}$), at their *spiritual* value only.

CHAPTER XXIV

"LOVEST THOU ME MORE THAN THESE?"

JOHN 18[15-18, 25-27]

"I PRAYED for thee" (Luke 22[32]). Jesus had not prayed that Simon might be kept from denying Him. For the vision of His disciple doing this had been seen as vividly and accepted as decidedly as that in which He saw Himself betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles, mocked, scourged, and crucified. He could not pray that a cup already accepted might pass from Him (18[11]). What He prayed for was that Simon's faith might not fail. Behind the certainty of the stumbling and the falling He saw the possibility of something far more terrible. It was good that Simon should learn a certain despair of himself. But what if this despair, going with his natural impulsiveness and wilfulness, should become a despair of God? What would the God and Father of his Lord have to say to a disciple who had played the part of a coward and a liar? All that seemed strongest in Simon would be at war with the idea that he could expect or even accept forgiveness. That is a terrible position in which all that makes us men

seems to stand between us and the right to ask or expect anything from God. "I have loved cricket so much all my life, that I have neglected the Saviour," said a dying sportsman. "Would it not be a shabby thing if I were to turn to Him only *now?*" "Yes," was the reply of his friend, "it would be a shabby thing, but it would be yet shabbier if you were still to refuse what He offers you still."[1] There is something which, if it be in a man only as a grain of mustard-seed, is stronger than anything in his own nature. It is faith in God as able and willing to help him even in his most shameful extremity. There is no well of hope deeper than his. Jesus prayed that this well might not go dry in His affectionate foolhardy disciple. Perhaps it was the remembrance of the words of Jesus in Luke $22^{31\,ff.}$ that kept Simon's despair of himself from becoming a despair of God and became a pledge of that second conversion, in which he found strength not for himself alone, but for his brethren.

Beyond the mention of him in $18^{15\,f}$, we hear nothing more of the "other disciple," who preceded Peter into the high-priest's house. It is not suggested that his presence was in any way a help to Jesus, or that he ran any risk in being where he was. Perhaps he did not join the group by the fire or, if he did, no one needed to ask any question

[1] Many years ago the present writer heard this story told at an Evangelistic meeting by Rev. R. M. Gray, lately of Bombay. Probably the story was first told in public by Henry Drummond.

regarding what everyone knew, viz. that he was an acquaintance [1] of the high-priest and a disciple of the Galilean. But Simon Peter was an unfamiliar, rather uncouth figure, with an abrupt manner and a look of embarrassment which invited attention. It is a sign both of his weakness and his strength that, unwarned by the question of the maid, and unashamed of the falsehood into which, he perhaps told himself, he had been unwarrantably surprised, he cannot, for all his desire to be unknown, remain in the shade.

So, this time from a number of mouths, there comes again the question he dreaded, yet had in his awkwardness invited: "Wert not thou also one of His disciples?" There is no sign of unfriendliness in the question. The questioners were a group of irresponsible underlings, glad of anything to talk of that had a spice of strangeness. The form of the question ("also") seems to imply that there was at least one other in the court known to be a disciple of Jesus. Yet Simon was surprised, irritated, and alarmed. He had not expected to have to lie again. Happily for himself, he was new to the craft of falsehood. Yet, according to this record, depending perhaps at this point peculiarly on the testimony of the "other disciple,"

[1] The word *gnōstos* does not necessarily imply either intimate acquaintance or blood-relationship, though it seems often to be used, especially in the plural, in the former sense. A man's *gnōstoi* would in certain contexts naturally mean his *intimates*.

it needed a third and yet more alarming putting of the same question—not to speak of the crowing of a cock—to recall to Simon his Master's warning prophecy and bring home his own position. In the dark of the Garden Simon had struck and wounded with his sword a servant of the high-priest. Our Evangelist can give us the servant's name. A relative of Malchus was in the crowd surrounding the officers who arrested Jesus. Simon was a prominent figure in the group round Jesus, and, for a moment at least, the light of the torches had gleamed on his sword and on his face. This kinsman was in the group round the fire. He looked on Peter's face, reflecting the blaze, and it struck him, though not with certainty, that he had seen it before. With a certain hesitation, perhaps, yet with an accent of growing conviction that startled Simon, as a sword pointed at his heart, there came the piercing question: "Did not I *see* thee in the Garden with Him?" Peter denied again with unholy emphasis, and the cock crew!

The story speaks for itself with many voices. Even if we cannot share their confidence, we may concede that the record has at this point a peculiar impressiveness for those who are convinced that it proceeds from John the Apostle, and that the latter was the "other disciple" as well as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." John, the son of Zebedee, who, for months and years after this, stood gladly

in the shadow of Peter, the Rock, recognising him as easily the chief and most dauntless first witness to the Cross and Lordship of Jesus, thinks it right to tell us the simple facts as he saw and heard them and to make no comment. We may imitate him in the latter respect, so far as to say only one thing. Self-love and self-confidence are deadly foes of the soul. They cast down even those who own Jesus as Master, not only to beneath His requirement, but to depths unspeakable beneath themselves. Yet if even in that tragic fall self-love and self-confidence are shattered, we may look to see such culprits rise again higher than whence they have fallen, and, if they will not say it for themselves, we may, "in meekness considering ourselves also," dare to say for them that the fall, however awful, has been worth while.

Notes

1. *Element of Personal Testimony in Johannine Record of the Passion.*—We have noted throughout our study the spiritualising tendencies of the Evangelist. He takes much from the earlier record of Jesus, yet he transforms everything. We may compare his case to that of the philosopher. Life is the same to the philosopher as to other men. Yet how different. To other men experience is more or less fragmentary; to the philosopher it is a unity. He has put the needle of his thought through it and drawn the fragments together. In a sense which careful readers will understand, John has spiritualised everything. We may call this spiritualising power, if we choose, a *gift*. To the

present writer it seems more. It is something inseparable from the Evangelist's personality. We may expect his personality to assert itself even in the story of the Passion. Yet in an obvious sense there is less scope for it here, where Jesus is not *acting* or speaking but *suffering*. Surely John must have felt it here a matter of first importance to present the outward details with accuracy. No doubt he will have his own way of putting the facts. There will always be more than strikes the eye or ear. But, for our own part, we cannot get rid of the impression that, both in his record of the Trial and of the Crucifixion itself, John had access to sources of information not open to the earlier Evangelists. A sign of this, as regards the former, is the

2. "*Other Disciple*" *of* $18^{15\,f.}$.—We have no means of naming him. We naturally think of the "disciple whom Jesus loved," but why is he not described as such? The same objection applies to Dr Abbott's suggestion that he was Judas. The "young man" of Mark $14^{50\,ff.}$ might suit, but he seems excluded by the fact that he is most probably Mark himself, in which case we would expect a greater similarity than actually exists between Mark's account of the Passion and our Evangelist's. Yet our inability to mention a name which the Evangelist withheld perhaps as effectually from his own generation as from ours, does not alter the fact that John's mention of the "other disciple" is his way of claiming the presence of an element of personal testimony in his record of the incidents of the Passion, in particular here of the fall of Peter, which is not claimed by the other Evangelists. Those who are attracted by the suggestion that the "other disciple" may have been Judas Iscariot will find much to interest them in the volume of Dr Abbott's *Fourfold Gospel*, entitled "The Beginning," p. 351 ff.

This may be a suitable place to mention an argument against the physical possibility of the Apostle John having been the writer of the Fourth Gospel based on an alleged statement of Papias of Hierapolis (second century, early) that "James and John were executed by the Jews." The writing in which the alleged statement occurs has not come down to us. There are two witnesses to the fact of the Papian statement. The earlier, Philip of Side, belongs to the fifth century; the later, Georgius Hamartolus, to the ninth. The statement in itself is vague, and Hamartolus, though he quotes it, quotes also, as if it were consistent with it, the belief of his own time that the Apostle was alive in Ephesus till near the end of the first century! Philip of Side is commonly referred to by scholars as a notoriously inaccurate historian, and there is a fact which seems to show his evidence in this case to be worthless. If Papias made the statement, or if it meant that John was executed by the Jews soon after his brother James (Acts 12[1]), it is surely certain that Eusebius (fourth century), who was *not* an inaccurate historian, who carefully searched the writings of Papias for testimony regarding the apostolic fathers, and would only too gladly have enrolled the Apostle John among the Palestinian martyrs, would have noted and quoted the alleged Papian testimony. The *internal* evidence against the Johannine authorship seems to us fairly strong, so strong as to leave the case for or against *in suspenso* at this hour, but this piece of *external* evidence seems to us so weak as to be safely negligible. On this subject see Drummond's *Character and Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 228 ff., and the third volume of Stanton's *Gospels as Historical Evidences*.

CHAPTER XXV

"NOT WATER ONLY, BUT WATER AND BLOOD"

A Scottish Communion Address

John 19[16-37], especially verse 34[f.]. Cp. 1 John 5[6]

The side of Jesus was pierced and there came forth water and blood. So testifies the witness who saw and knew that he spoke the truth. The Evangelist's emphasis upon the testimony becomes intelligible when we remember that a heresy of his time denied all efficacy to the death of Jesus. The Divine, it was said, could not suffer. The Spirit that came on Jesus at His baptism remained with Him in life, but deserted Him in death. We may receive His Spirit, but there is no food for us in His body and blood. There should, therefore, be in the Church but the one Sacrament—the water only, not the water *and* the blood. This was to our Evangelist deadly heresy. It amounted to the denial that the Son of God had really come in the flesh (1 John 4[1 ff.]). It meant a redemption begun, but not finished and therefore not really begun at all. The Son of God was made flesh, not really, but only in appearance. He was God all the time, never really man.

It is in the light of his attitude to this heresy

that we see most clearly our Evangelist's leading motive in his peculiar representation of the spectacle of the Cross. He wishes us to see that in everything Jesus suffers, He is doing some part of the work He came to do. Even those incidents that were in their own nature outside His conscious will, such as the partition of His clothes and the piercing of His side, were in God's counsel of redemption and happened according to prophecy. When He exclaimed, "I thirst," or said afterwards, "It is finished," it was not because He must find some utterance for His awful anguish. It was in order, rather, to give a sign that the work appointed for Him in God's counsel and set forth in prophecy was near its end or actually accomplished. And, even when the end has come, John is not content to say, with the other Evangelists, "He expired." What he says is, "He yielded up the Spirit," *i.e.* to the Father. The phrase rendered, "*bowed* His head," means rather, in John's vocabulary, "*rested* [1] His head." And the suggestion taken up by one of the great painters of the Crucifixion, Guido Reni, is that in the moment of death Jesus did not let His head sink forward, but threw it back upon the Cross, so that for a moment at least it rested there

[1] So, *e.g.*, Abbott (*op. cit.*). Mark and Luke use the one word *exepneusen* = "He expired." Matthew says, *aphēken to pneuma* = "He let go the spirit." John says, *paredōken to pneuma* = "He gave over the spirit," *scilicet*, to God, prefacing with the phrase *klinas tēn kephalēn* = "having rested His head."

in token of victory—the face upturned to meet the light of Heaven. The death was no mere suffering. It was a *doing*, even a conscious doing for us.

There are yet two items of this Gospel's story of the Cross on which it is good to dwell for a moment. The one is the obstinacy of Pilate regarding the inscription on the Cross. That inscription proclaimed in the three great languages of the world of that day that the Crucified One was King of the Jews. John had not, presumably, any more admiration for the character of Pilate than the other Evangelists. But he brings out in some ways more clearly than they that Roman law and justice would never have interfered with such a Person as Jesus of Nazareth. Pilate's hand was forced by the Jewish authorities and populace, and John's account of the conversation between the chief priests and Pilate about the inscription lets us see that Pilate bitterly resented the violation of his convictions that was forced upon him by people whom he both despised and feared. We see, perhaps, nothing to admire in the Governor's haughty refusal to alter what he had written. Yet we see, possibly, also, that our Evangelist looked with the eyes of a seer upon the inscription in the three languages. He sees in the obstinacy of Pilate a " sign " of that in which there is no caprice, seeing it is eternal and unchangeable as the purpose of God. The inscription is to him a herald

running swiftly, like fire over heather, and proclaiming to all the world that its King has been found in Jerusalem, where He has been rejected and crucified by His own people. The Jews might crucify Jesus, yet He remained their King. His words and His deeds would judge them at the last. Pilate might profess the utmost indifference to all things Jewish yet he could not get rid of that Jewish Prisoner on his hands without a decision which should lay bare his own character, yes, and Roman law itself, to their foundation. The Jews were guiltier than Pilate when they betrayed their Prophet to a sinner of the Gentiles. Yet Pilate's cup of guilt was full enough also when he gave over an innocent man to the hands of false and murderous accusers. We may be haughtily indifferent to Jesus. We may even hate Him. But we cannot get rid of Him. We cannot get away even from His Cross. We must either, like that disciple whom He loved, stand near His Cross, so near that we can hear Him speak, *as* He speaks to hearts that love and adore, or we must stand afar off in the company, whether we like it or not, not simply of those who are too fearful and too faithless to draw near, but of those who deride and blaspheme. So true is it that Jesus, and Jesus *Crucified*, is, for good or ill, the conscience of every one of us still. King of the Jews, King of Truth—how do *we*, each one of us, stand to *Him?*

There is yet another item in the story of the Cross,

as John tells it. The Jews of that day gave Jesus of Nazareth over to the Cross, constraining a magistrate of the world-power to be the executor of their wicked and cruel will. They repudiated their Messiah ; but their Messiah did not repudiate them. We have in this record that scene of Jesus and His mother and the beloved disciple. It is a domestic scene of rare loveliness, and we must take it in the first instance just as it strikes us. Jesus gave His last thoughts to His stricken mother. Who could comfort her but one whom her Son had loved ? She and the beloved disciple were to be henceforth mother and son. We may take it for certain, however, that over and above this obvious meaning, which touches all our hearts, this moving scene had for our Evangelist one of wider import. The mother of Jesus and the beloved disciple are both historical characters. But they are also *symbolical* characters. And this is a symbolic scene, like that scene at the wedding-party in Cana of Galilee, where also the mother of Jesus was present and the water was turned into wine. These are, in John's Gospel, the only scenes in which " the mother of Jesus " appears, and, when the two scenes are looked at from the inside, they seem to yield pretty much the same meaning. Jesus sprang in flesh and spirit from the Jewish nation and religion. He came to turn the water into wine, in other words, to put a new meaning and power into the Jewish religion. Yet

from the Jewish religion, in the best sense of the expression, He Himself sprang. He owned it as His Mother. The Temple was His Father's House. Jerusalem was the City of the Great King. There was still that in the old religion—the religion of the Old Testament—which was worthy to be nourished. Let it be nourished and tended in the home of Christian love, so that when the old Institution should pass away it should leave behind it a Son better than itself, standing erect and fearless upon the ruins of Temple and Synagogue—the vigorous, free, undying Christian faith and fellowship. The Disciple, presumably, survived the adopted Mother. He lived to see early Jewish Christianity, beautiful in its tender dutifulness to the old Institute, pass into the higher beauty of a new faith, recognising as the Son of God, not the Jewish nation, however idealised, but Jesus only, whom the Jews crucified, and offering to Jew and Gentile alike life through His Name.

Sitting at this Communion Table, using these emblems of the Passion of the Son of God, having fellowship with One who has come to His place in our hearts, not through water only, but through water *and blood*, we think of Christianity as the absolute religion. We look out from this distressed, sin-struck, unbelieving world, and we think of a Kingdom that depends only on the holy, loving, sacrificial will of God, and the qualification of

whose subjects is not that they are Jews or Gentiles, but simply that they are men. How is this great hope to be fulfilled? It does not hang in the air. It rises out of the past, it makes the present, and it has its centre in Jesus and Him Crucified. In Him past and present meet, for truly *to remember* Him is also to have *communion* with Him. Mary and the Disciple stand together under the Cross, and Mary goes to both safety and honour when she enters the house of one whom Jesus loved. All that seems to us venerable and precious, all that calls up the loyalties of the heart, and speaks of a service of God that is also the utmost service of man, all that shuts a protecting door on the tender and sacred things of life and finds a holy of holies in the intimacies of a home—let us bring it all with us to-day as we stand with our sins and needs under the Cross of Christ. And He will give it all back to us with fulness of His Grace to keep it all, in His name, in trust for God and for man, "until He come."

Note

"*He who has seen has borne witness*," *etc.*, 19^{35}, cp. 21^{24}.—The former, 19^{35}, is a "crucial" text bearing on the authority of the Fourth Gospel. Three important questions arise: (1) Is the *witness* in the intention of the Evangelist the same with "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the latter being the only friend of Jesus of the male sex who is represented as standing near the Cross (verse 25)? (2) Is the person called "that one" (*ekeinos*) in the second clause of 19^{35}, who "knows that

he (the witness) speaks the truth" the same with the witness? (3) What is the value of the testimony? Bacon (*op. cit.*), who speaks with scepticism of the alleged incident, viz. the spear-thrust and its sequel, seems to us to be right in one particular. He remarks with force that 19^{35} is inseparable in a literary point of view from 21^{24}, and is, so to say, on the same level. It is an editorial parenthesis intended to accredit the Gospel as resting on the testimony of an eye-and-ear witness. But if the two verses come, as we believe with Bacon they in all probability do, from the same hand, the latter must be held to remove the ambiguity left by the former as to who the witness is. The witness in 19^{35} is undoubtedly, in the light of 21^{24}, intended to be represented as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." In regard to the latter Bacon holds a suggestive but wholly speculative theory to the effect that in the original Gospel, *i.e.* the Gospel that remains when we have cleared away all additions and editorial comments —both, according to Bacon, pretty large items—the "disciple whom Jesus loved" was in the intention of the author none other than the Apostle Paul, the only "disciple" who ever spoke of him*self* as loved by Jesus (Gal. 2^{20}). We regard this theory as a freak of the historical imagination, yet we are in a certain agreement with Bacon when he goes on to say that the editorial comments, and particularly the references to the "disciple" in chapter 21—especially verse 2, containing the list of the post-Resurrection fishers—shut us up to the belief that the editors intended their readers to infer that the "disciple" was John, the son of Zebedee. We are, indeed, when all is said, without the means of determining who wrote the Fourth Gospel. Yet, if an inextinguishable curiosity compels us to

ask the question, the most *probable* answer is still that the author was both intended to be represented as *and was* the Apostle John. It seems to us that the answer just given to the first question contains also the answer to the second. It is no doubt surprising, in a merely linguistic or literary aspect, that a person referred to in the first clause of a short sentence should be mentioned in the second as "*that* one" and not simply as *he*, though, as Drummond (*op. cit.*, p. 392) shows, an instance of this usage can be quoted from so fine a literary model as Thackeray's *Esmond*. But if, as in the case of $11^{49, 51}$, 18^{13}, we lay a certain stress on the demonstrative pronoun, we may perhaps feel it reasonable to suppose that, while perhaps out of deference to wishes expressed by the Disciple, the editors abstained from introducing his name, they used just such a device as the emphasised demonstrative pronoun to impress upon their readers the immense value which ought to be attached to their master's testimony as a warrant for believing in "Jesus to the full measure of having life in His name" (20^{31}). The third question will naturally seem to all the most important. Yet we do not ask it here directly in what may seem its broadest sense, that, viz. of asking what is the spiritual value of the Fourth Gospel. We have emphasised in these pages the pervading idealism of the Gospel, but we have also tried to bear in mind the fact that the Gospel, like the First Epistle of John, was written in order to insist that the manifestation of the Son of God in the flesh was real and not merely apparent. Therefore we have habitually pointed out the historic background of the Gospel as we may find it in the synoptic tradition. Allowing fully that the Evangelist's idealism pervades (as why should it not?)

his representation of the Passion of Jesus, we have not been able to resist the impression that here he adds elements of personal testimony, which in their own case were not available for the earlier Evangelists. Whatever we may think of the *literary* origin of 19^{35}, it is plain that it claims for the narrative of the spear-thrust and its sequel (and therefore, surely, for a good deal more) that it rests on a basis of testimony as to what the first narrator actually saw as he stood under the cross. To suppose that the editors simply invented what Bacon calls the "apocalyptic" story of the spear-thrust is to ascribe to them a degree of spiritual idealism with which probably Bacon would be the last man to credit them. To suppose on the other hand that the "original Evangelist," whether the Apostle John or not, invented, it seems to us an example of critical purblindness which, to quote a trivial yet suggestive parallel, may be compared with that of the verdict certain critics passed on Sir J. M. Barrie's *The Young Visiters* to the effect that, in spite of Barrie's plain testimony to the contrary, that inimitable specimen of a child's precocity was written from board to board by Barrie himself and had nothing to do with the little girl whose photograph appears in the frontispiece. We must, when he claims it, concede to a literary artist, whether a first-century Evangelist or a twentieth-century dramatist, the right to be taken literally at his word.

As to the alleged physiological impossibility of the phenomenon of the "water and the blood," let the doctors speak. To us it is quite sufficient for conservation of the value of the testimony to believe that the witness saw what seemed to him both at the time and in after-reflection to be water and blood proceeding from the Saviour's pierced side. Surely we may leave it at that.

CHAPTER XXVI

BELIEVING WITHOUT SEEING

JOHN 20, especially verse 29

THE Evangelist would show us in this closing chapter the superior blessedness of those who believe without seeing. He is not hindered, as we might suppose, by the fact that all whom he can mention really saw the Risen Lord. For he asks: Did they believe *before* they saw, or *because* they saw? And he decides on the former alternative for all but Thomas. There is, *e.g.*, the case of the Disciple whom Jesus loved, who is, whatever else, a type of intimate fellowship with Jesus and quick perception of Jesus. He outruns Peter in eagerness to know the secret of the empty tomb, and though Peter was the first to enter the tomb, it is not said of him what is said of the Disciple, that "he saw and believed." Yet what John saw at this time was not the living Jesus. All he saw was the empty tomb and the folded grave-clothes. Not grave-robbers, but only Jesus, could have done this. Whoever might be dead, He who loved him and whom he loved, was alive for evermore. The

Disciple believed in the Risen Jesus without having seen Him.

Before the Disciple in arrival at the tomb was Mary of Magdala, who presumably was known to the Evangelist and his readers as one from whom there had gone out seven devils (Luke 8^2). Of all the persons, of all the women especially, who followed Jesus there was perhaps none whose personal debt to Jesus was so great as this Mary's. We do not nowadays use the language of the first century, yet we have no serious difficulty in understanding that which describes the affliction of Mary. But there is possibly one error against which we should warn ourselves. Luke does *not* mean that Mary was the chief of sinners. Rather something not unlike the opposite. Mary's was a case in which, so far as could be seen, the possibility of a moral life, the possibility of either praise or blame, was altogether absent. To be "possessed" by "seven devils" means to be robbed of one's personality and be simply a centre of the forces that destroy life. One day during His mission in Galilee this woman crossed the path of Jesus. He understood her case and spoke the commanding word. She became mistress of herself and slave for ever to Him. Taking then the narrative before us, may we say that Mary believed before she saw the Risen Jesus? The evangelist, we think, says *Yes*. It was not the sight or voice of angels that

made Mary believe. Their presence is borrowed from the earlier narratives and looks like lumber in John's story. Mary, at any rate, does not heed them. It was not even the sight or voice of Jesus. For Mary did not recognise Him even when He spoke. It was not, therefore, the voice in itself. But was it not the *tone* of the voice? He said, *Mary*; and she said, *Master*. She would have grasped His feet, but He hindered her, as if declining an intimacy of communion, for which the time was not yet. She became by His commission the first witness of His Resurrection to His *brethren*, *i.e.* to all who were ready to believe.

It can hardly be that the Evangelist means to say that Mary's type of faith was inferior to that of the Disciple. True, the empty tomb, even with the addition of the angels, left her cold, whereas even without the angels the Disciple had believed. But those differences are superficial. Whether through the empty tomb and the folded grave-clothes, or through the accent of a voice, what woke faith in each case was something irresistibly suggestive of Jesus. No hand of man had touched the stone that shut in that sepulchre, yet the stone was rolled away and within were only the folded wrappings of the dead. The Disciple "*saw* and believed." No voice but One could have spoken her name in an accent that so touched Mary's memory and heart. It was the same voice in which

He had bidden the devils depart and restored her to herself. Mary *heard* and believed. Yet it was not the mere audible voice that made her believe. It was rather the persuasion that One whose love had done so much for her was Master and Lord for ever, and the only way for men to life and freedom in God. If we believe that Jesus lives and reigns, what is the main cause of that "believing" in each of us? Is it not our personal relation to Him, our consciousness of personal debt to Him? We were inhabited by seven devils, and He came to us and set us free. In proportion as we believe in our release, we shall believe also that our Liberator is alive.

Thus far, we have had two cases of faith in the Risen Jesus not unconnected with seeing and hearing, yet in a fair sense independent of both. They are cases of *individuals*. What now about *group* cases of believing, and what about the believing of an individual, who insists upon seeing, saying, "I will not believe unless I see, yes, and touch also"? John tells us of an appearance of the Risen Jesus, and the repetition of it, to the company of the disciples gathered in an upper chamber behind barred doors. They feared the Jews—these active and determined unbelievers, who had crucified the Lord. But, let it not be forgotten, they feared still more the loss of their fellowship one with another in the memory and

love of Jesus. What made these men rally, and rally in Jerusalem, presumably after despair and flight? (Matt. 26^{56}, Mark 14^{50}). Perhaps they could not at the moment have themselves told us. Yet quite confidently we may put their half-unconscious reasoning into words: "For all that has happened, Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Saviour. We cannot deny our hope in Him to one another. We dare not withhold the testimony of that hope from the world. At the present moment we dare not refuse to confess the hope, if need be, to our fiercely antagonistic fellow-countrymen, though they may treat us as they treated Him." It was to men in this mood, anxious yet determined, distressed and perplexed yet *believing*, that Jesus came. To them He spoke His peace. On them He breathed His spirit. To them He gave the great commission to be in the world messengers of God the Father, even as He had been.

Now, of course, these men *saw* the Risen Jesus. He "showed them His hands and His side," and, of course, "they were glad when they saw the Lord." But would you say that they believed because they had seen, and not rather that they believed *before* they had seen? We think of their yearning for their Lord, we think of their coming together in that yearning at the risk of their lives, and are confident for our part in saying, as we

believe the Evangelist means to say, that they believed *before* they had seen.

Yet the Evangelist knew that something could be said on the other side. He knew that the tradition embodied in the earlier Gospels indicated a certain element of doubt and fear on the part of some who ranked as disciples—an element not dissipated even by the sight of the Risen Jesus. To sight there must be added touch. They must "handle Him and see" that He was "flesh and bones." He is seen to eat some fish and honey.[1]

Our Evangelist does justice to this side of the matter in the moving story of the doubting Thomas. Remembering other things he has told us about this disciple (11^{16}, 14^{5}), we are probably more disposed to sympathise with Thomas than to blame him. Yet Thomas *ought* to have believed the testimony of his brethren. He ought to have reflected that a group of ten men, and ten such men as he knew his brethren to be, were not in the least likely to be the joint victims of an optical illusion. And not merely sight, but hearing and touch, had been involved in their common attested experience. Moreover, Thomas ought not to have spoken as if believing or not believing depended on his private will and not upon public evidence. Finally, Thomas set one sense against another,

[1] These features, however, are found, so far as the Synoptists are concerned, only in Luke (24^{37-43}).

and spoke as if touch could yield him more infallible evidence than sight. That is a fallacy, whether you look at it from the point of view of theory or of experience. Who shall decide for Isaac between the conflicting testimonies of hearing and touch? "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen 27^{22}). Isaac had Thomas's preference for touch, and he was deceived. Thomas ought to have reflected that to touch Jesus might be just as misleading as to see or hear Him. For all that, we may well love Thomas: (1) Because behind his doubts were his love of Jesus and longing for him; (2) Because in the presence of the Risen Jesus he renounced his doubts for ever; and (3) Because his confession of faith is so short and so satisfying. He said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God."

This closing narrative of our Gospel lays a vivid and valuable stress on the worthlessness of *sense*-tests of faith. Whatever value or even necessity for faith there may have been in those manifestations of the Risen Jesus through sight, or hearing, or touch, of which we read in the Gospels, they have no such necessity or value *now*, and to insist upon them, or to go in search of them beyond the Christian fellowship and teaching to modes of investigation that are at best tentative, and are still without the certificate of science, is not an act of faith, but rather an act of unbelief. It is to

say : " Except I see and hear and touch, I will not believe." The strength and beauty of faith do not lie in its being confirmed by the senses, but in its being independent of them. It may be right and necessary to believe because one has seen. But he who begins faith in this way lacks the blessing peculiar to those who have not seen and yet have believed.

One other matter—to close with, and to rest in : We, with all, or at least most of, the generations succeeding that of the earliest believers are those who have *not* enjoyed and are not likely in this world to enjoy any manifestation of the Risen Jesus through our senses. We are not likely to be permitted either to see or hear or touch Him. Does this story help us to the perception of any reason why we should just, *therefore*, regard ourselves not as persons to be commiserated, but, rather, as those who are peculiarly blessed ? We have, of course, the word of Jesus, and that may well suffice us. Yet we are not forbidden, rather the word itself urges us to seek the reason that is the soul of the word. Thomas's short confession of faith gives us the reason. It gives us the only reason that can satisfy human beings, who are seeking the life that is life indeed, and fully gets the better of death. Thomas was a searcher for that life. He knew at that moment as never before that he had found his quest in Jesus Crucified.

For in love to God and man this Man had laid down His life that He might take it again and impart it to all who will receive it and live. No testimony of sense can ever lead anyone to a sure and lasting faith. The reason is not that the witness to the truth is far away in the heights or in the depths; but "the word is very [1] nigh" us—nearer than eye or ear or hand. It is the cry irrepressible of the spirit within us for righteousness and life and God. And Jesus alone in all the history of the world has so answered that cry as to set it at rest for all who receive Him.

Let us, then, reading the things written of Him in this book of the Disciple, receive Him by faith into our hearts. Let us realise His presence. Let us by obedience to His words place ourselves to catch the breath of His Spirit. Then going out from Him, our Lord and our God, to bless the world, we shall yet ever abide in Him. And because He lives, we and all who believe, being made Sons of God, shall live also.

Note

Peculiarities of the Johannine Narrative of the Resurrection.—A careful scrutiny of the contents of chapter 20 will, we believe, corroborate the view taken above of its leading motive. A prominent feature of the narrative is its concentration upon individual cases—Mary Magdalene, Peter and the Disciple, Thomas.

[1] Deut. 30^{12} ff.

The *other* women, most numerous in Luke's narrative (23^{55}, 24^{10}), are not mentioned. Though so sympathetic a Johannine scholar as Drummond (*op. cit.*) slights the suggestion, a spiritual contrast between Peter and the Disciple seems to be intended. Peter is notoriously a strong energetic man, but love outruns physical strength. Peter goes first into the sepulchre but has no light upon the fact of it being empty, whereas the Disciple "saw and believed," owing nothing either to a "vision of angels" or to the prophecies of Scripture, which as yet he knew not (verse 9). For a similar reason Mary sees at first no angels, otherwise her report to Peter and the Disciple must have been different. The angels appear at verse 12, but are no help to Mary. They are mentioned because they are in the prevailing tradition, and the Evangelist must find a place for them, but they serve no function. Though they speak to Mary, they do not tell her that Jesus is standing behind her. The reason of this is explained above: The Disciple saw no angels, and Mary got no help from them. Verse 17 ("Touch Me not," etc.) is a good instance of the peculiar inward suggestiveness of the Johannine style. John would say, through Jesus, that physical contact has nothing to do with true faith in the Risen Jesus or with communion through Him with the Father. True communion begins, rather, when Jesus goes to the Father. The lesson is the same with that of Jesus' words of rebuke to Thomas.

In the account of the appearances to the disciples as a company, nothing is said about Galilee—an omission which the editors put right in the Appendix (chapter 21); and there is no hint, as in the interview with Mary, of any peculiar benefit to be experienced when the season of occasional manifestations is past.

But *there* and *then*—on the very day of the Resurrection —Jesus gives the disciples their commission and the *power* (the Holy Spirit) that went with it. The Evangelist's attitude to the Ascension resembles his attitude to the Sacraments. As he is silent about the *institution* of the Sacraments, so he is silent about the *event* of the Ascension. Yet it is, perhaps, true to say that more is claimed both for the Sacraments and for the power proceeding from the Unseen Jesus in the Johannine Gospel than anywhere else in the New Testament.

Note on the Appendix (*Chapter* 21).

The postscript is sometimes the most important part of the important letter. Without claiming so much for this postscript, it will be no unfitting close to these studies to set down what we think its principal motives. It proceeds not from the writer of the Gospel but from those who may be described as his *School*, or from one of the School empowered to speak for all. It attests their master's authorship of the Gospel and the truth of his story or *testimony*. The " disciple whom Jesus loved " lived to a great age. It was believed for a time very generally in the Church that he would not die before the Lord came, and it was said that the Lord had spoken to that effect. The writer can show how the belief originated, and how it was unwarrantable. The Lord's prophecy was not fulfilled in the case of the Disciple, for it was never uttered. On the other hand, it *was* fulfilled in the case of Peter who suffered a violent death.

Beyond these motives for the Appendix, which may be called individual and personal, there seem to be

two that have a wider reference, though they proceed from the same general desire to maintain the reliableness of the Disciple's testimony. Testimony may be reliable so far as it goes. Yet it may be insufficient. In two directions the writer of the Appendix wished to supplement his master's testimony.

The *one* had reference to the Galilean connections of Jesus and the Church. No exception is taken to the scantiness of the references to Galilee in the story of the earthly ministry of Jesus. But was it right to ignore the fact that the Resurrection-power originated in Galilee rather than in Jerusalem ? The writer rectifies this neglect by a story of the fishermen's night and morning and of a meal with Jesus, for which, following the literary methods of his master, he finds the materials in Luke $5^{1\,ff.}$, $24^{41\,ff.}$. Only, the *meal*, as well as the fishing, took place not in Jerusalem but by the Lake of Galilee.

The *other* direction is that of the relations of the Disciple and Peter. In the Gospel it might seem as though the Disciple were exalted in some degree at the cost of Peter. How could depreciation in *any* sense accord with the great and just practical supremacy of Peter in the primitive church ? The writer seems to us to solve the problem with both spiritual insight and literary skill.

The scene of Peter's episcopal installation (if we may call it so) may be as imaginary as much else in the Johannine Gospel. But imagination in this case also worked, as we believe it did throughout the composition of the Gospel, on a solid basis of remembered fact (1 Cor. 15^{5}, Mark 16^{7}, Luke 24^{34}), and it rises to a great height in the truth that is living and eternal. Peter and Paul, the historic heads, respectively, of the

Jewish and the Gentile Church, both connected their supremacy in Christ's service with the fact that they had been chief offenders against Christ. Peter denied Him; Paul persecuted Him (Acts 9^5). We may fitly put into the mouth of Peter words alleged to have been used in his own case by Paul: "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as first the Lord might manifest the *whole of* long-*suffering*, for a type to those who should afterwards believe on Him unto eternal life" (1 Tim. 1^{16}). It is not the least of the great thoughts that come within the compass of the great Johannine Gospel that a connection between chieftainship in sin and chieftainship in service, should it be established, is to the glory of God (21^{19}). It is to the glory of the "grace and truth" that were by Jesus Christ (1^{17}).

On the whole, whether we look to literary skill or spiritual insight, or a certain inward suggestiveness, of which the best definition is contained in the word *Johannine*, it seems to us, if we may revert to our figure, that the postscript is worthy of the letter.

In a course of three lectures delivered in the University of Bristol in November 1924, and subsequently published under the title *Christian Beginnings*, Professor F. C. Burkitt of Cambridge has, *inter alia*, presented with great skill a case for refusing to associate the manifestation of the Risen Jesus, or the beginning of the Christian Church, with Galilee. He emphasises the fact that early Church history knows nothing of a Christian community in Galilee, and thinks that Luke and John give a full account of matters when they locate the beginning of the power of the Risen Jesus and the beginning of His Church in Jerusalem. The present writer had the privilege both of hearing the lectures and of reading the book. The latter is a striking

example of that competence, clearness, and power of condensation which Dr Burkitt's previous work on the New Testament had led us to expect. Yet, after both hearing the lectures and reading the book, the present writer remains unconvinced that, in the relation above indicated, the Professor has said the last word about Galilee or has disposed of the obstacle to acceptance of his view presented by Mark 14^{28} and 16^{7} (cp. Matt. 26^{32} and 28^{7}).

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